KILLING HITLER

What if the assassination plot had succeeded?

DA VINCI VS MICHELANGELO

Inside the battle between Renaissance rivals

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

THE LOST PIRATE REPUBLIC

How the Caribbean's most feared outlaws tried to build their own nation in paradise

DESPOT OR DESPERATE?

Why Nero was Rome's most tormented tyrant

QUEST OF THE ALCHEMISTS

Gold making, eternal life and medieval obsession

ANCIENT CHINA'S GREATEST TREASURES

From the Terracotta Army to the Great Wall

ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN QUEEN

Empress Matilda's fight for her promised throne

FUTURE

ISSUE 116

GREECE: LEGACIES

LECTURE THREE: "GREECE: FUTURES"

PRESENTED BY THE GENNADIUS LIBRARY
OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

MAY 10, 2022

TUESDAY | 6:00 P.M. EDT
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH,
NEW YORK CITY

PETER FRANKOPAN

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR | PROFESSOR OF GLOBAL HISTORY, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

GENNADIUS LIBRARY
INAUGURATED 1926

Dr. Frankopan's lectures will examine the role that Greece and Greek culture, literature, and language have played over the course of more than two and a half millennia. Rather than exploring the familiar and limited Mediterranean context, he will discuss it from a global perspective, allowing for a better understanding of not only world history but Greece itself.

Broadcast on youtube.com/c/ascsaathens

The piracy boom in the Caribbean in the early 1700s was short-lived, but left a lasting legacy

Welcome

The legends of history often prove to be more fun than the realities. Such is the case with the pirates of the 18th century and in particular those famous names like Blackbeard and Anne Bonny. The stories of the swashbuckling adventures of rogues of the high seas, as dark as they can sometimes be, are rather far-fetched. The golden age of the pirate has been greatly romanticised, but there remain a number of fascinating stories.

Our cover feature this issue is one such real tale of the attempted community of pirates in Nassau, popularly known as the pirate republic. We welcome historian Angus Konstam to dissect this curious story and pick through the myth and legend to give us the real history of how a band of pirates came to settle in one place and unite their efforts, if only for a while. Was it really the pirate republic some have claimed?

Also in this issue we take a closer look at the reign of Nero in Rome and whether he was entirely the villain history has tended to remember. We reveal the story of England's lost queen, Empress Matilda, who was denied the throne she was promised and fought to claim it back. Plus the Renaissance rivalry of Da Vinci and Michelangelo, the secrets of alchemy, what if the Valkyrie plot to assassinate Hitler had worked, and more. As always, I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

Be part of history

historyanswers.co.uk
Share your views and opinions online

Facebook
/AllAboutHistory

Twitter
@AboutHistoryMag

ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Future Publishing Limited
Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor **Jonathan Gordon**
jonathan.gordon@futurenet.com
Art Editor **Kym Winters**
Features Editor **Callum McKelvie**
Staff Writer **Emily Staniforth**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
Editor in Chief **Tim Williamson**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors
Hareth Al Bustani, Mike Haskew, Angus Konstam, William E Welsh, David Williamson

Cover images
Joe Cummings, Alamy, Getty Images

Photography and illustration
Joe Cummings, Kevin McGivern, Adrian Mann, Alamy, Getty Images, Thinkstock, Royal Collection Trust
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected.

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Advertising Director **Matthew Johnston**
matthew.johnston@futurenet.com
07974 408083
Account Manager **Garry Brookes**
garry.brookes@futurenet.com
020 3970 4176

International Licensing
All About History is available for licensing and syndication. To find our more contact us at **licensing@futurenet.com** or view our available content at **www.futurecontenthub.com**
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**

Subscriptions
Enquiries **help@magazinesdirect.com**
Order line & enquiries **+44 (0) 330 333 1113**
Online orders & enquiries **www.magazinesdirect.com**
Group Marketing Director, Magazines & Memberships **Sharon Todd**

Disruption remains within UK and International delivery networks. Please allow up to 7 days before contacting us about a late delivery to **help@magazinesdirect.com**

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Ben Oakden**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Nola Cokely**

Management
Content Director **Gemma Lavender**
Chief Growth Officer **Claire MacLellan**
Commercial Finance Director **Tom Swayne**
Managing Director **Sarah Rafati Howard**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by Wyndeham Peterborough, Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5YS

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 2052-5870

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill and printer hold full FSC and PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

ipso. Regulated

Widely Recycled

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

CONTENTS

ISSUE 116

ALL ABOUT...

Key Events 12
Timeline of Ancient China

Inside History 14
Tomb of Qin Shi Huang

Anatomy 16
Scholar of the four arts

Historical Treasures 17
Gold mask of Sanxingdui

Hall Of Fame 18
Leading figures of Ancient China

Q&A 20
Dr Roel Sterckx on the influence of ancient China

Places To Explore 22
Ruins of Ancient China

FEATURES

26 **Lost Pirate Republic**
How a band of criminals came together to build a nation

36 **Nero: The Art of Tyranny**
Was the infamous emperor a miscreant or misunderstood?

42 **The Myth of the U-boats**
Germany's submarine tactics examined and explained

46 **Lost Queen of England**
Empress Matilda's battle to claim her throne

52 **The Secrets of Alchemy**
The quest to turn metals into gold and unlock eternal life

58 **Renaissance Rivals**
The Da Vinci and Michelangelo duel that inspired masterpieces

REGULARS

Defining Moments 06
Photos with amazing stories

Greatest Battles 64
The Americans under siege at the Battle of Dak To

What If 70
Operation Valkyrie had assassinated Hitler?

Through History 74
Japanese treasures in a British palace

Reviews 78
Our verdict on the latest historical books and media

History Vs Hollywood 81
Does *I Was Monty's Double* sacrifice facts for fun?

Recipe 82
How to make salmagundi

Subscribe and save!

Discover our exclusive offer for new readers on page 24

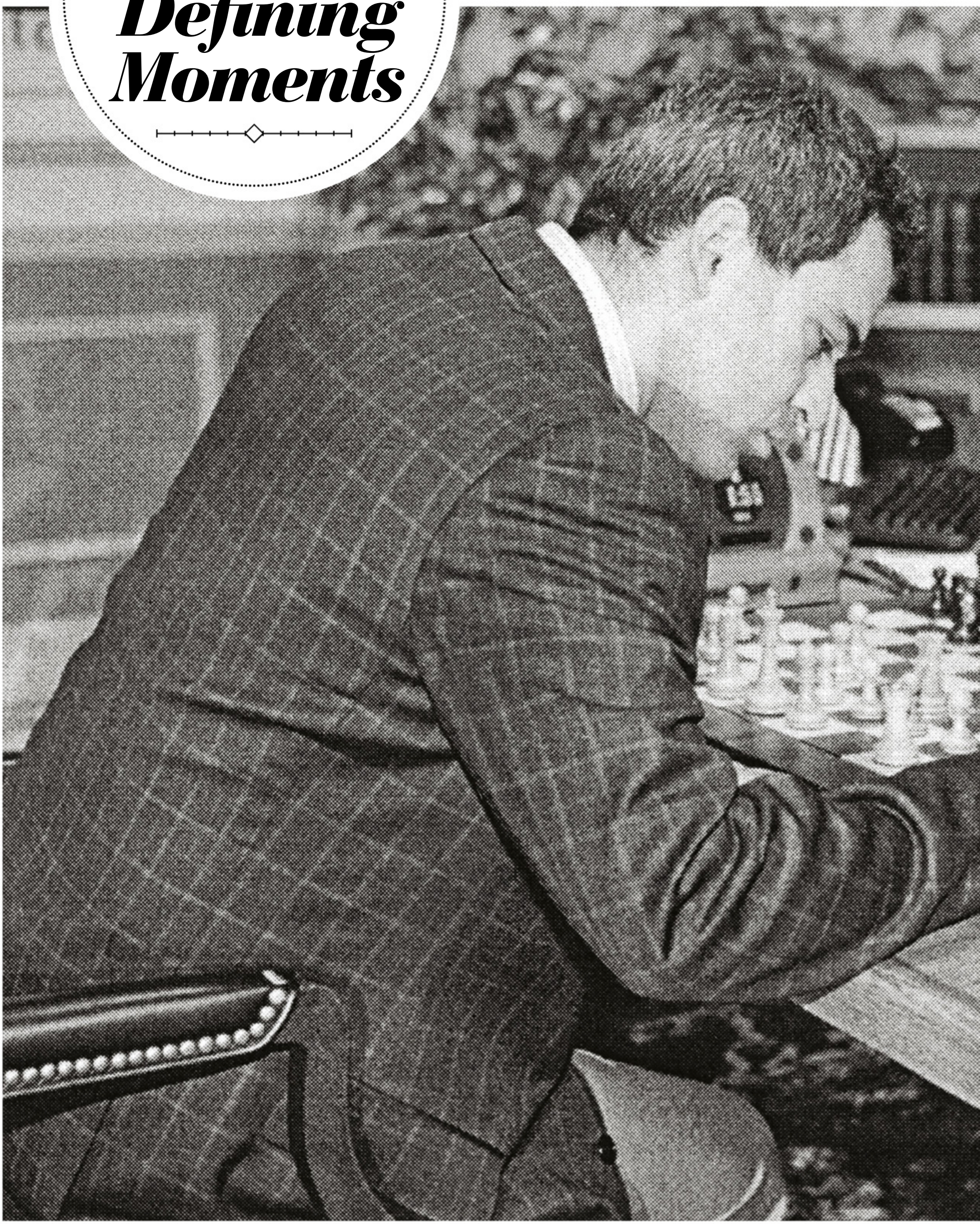
Main image: © Alamy

26

The Lost Pirate Republic

How the Caribbean's most feared outlaws tried to build their own nation in paradise

Defining Moments

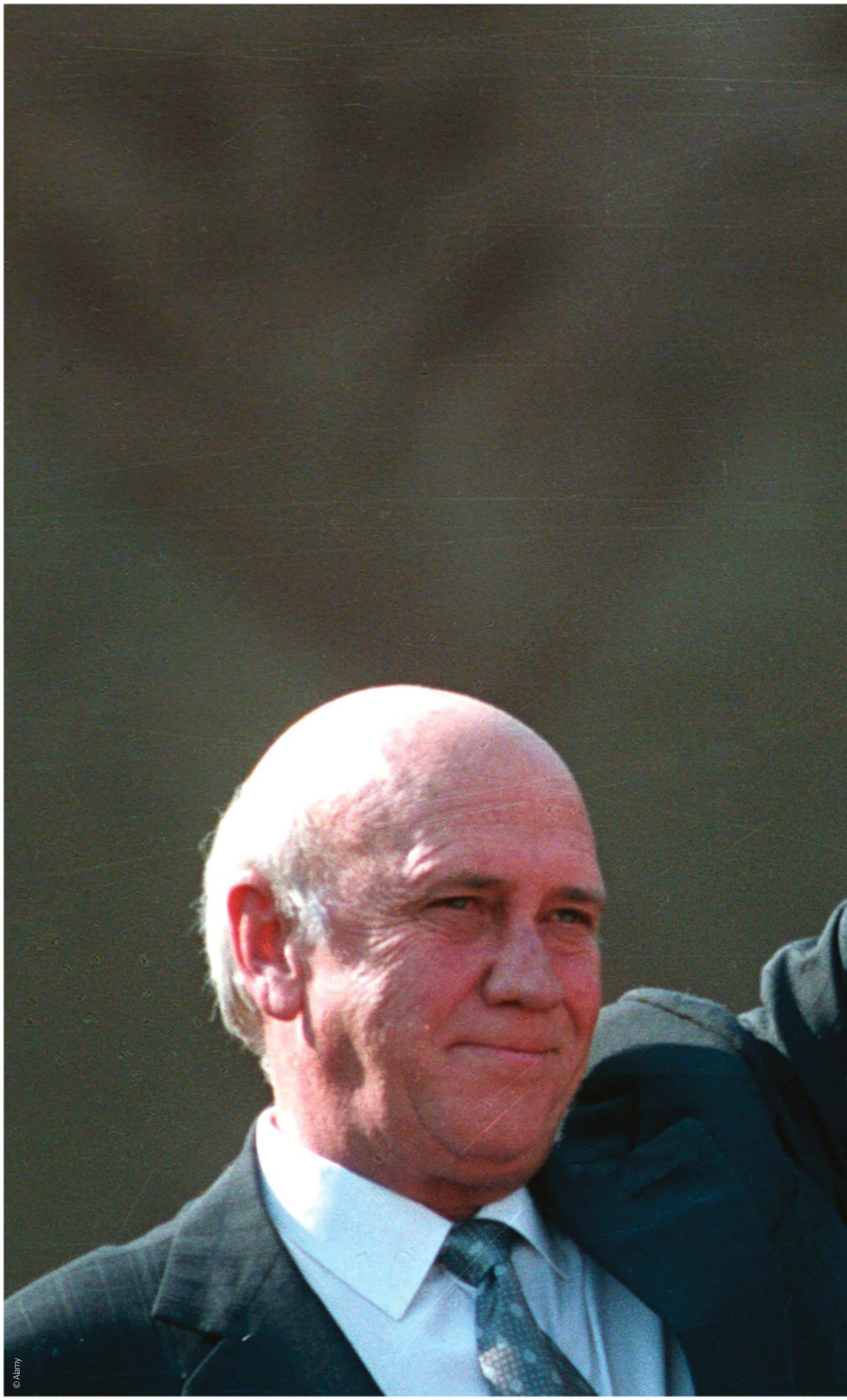


© Alamy

11 May 1997

CHESS CHAMPION KASPAROV IS BEATEN BY DEEP BLUE

Garry Kasparov, the Russian chess grandmaster, played his final game against the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue. The machine won the match and in doing so became the first computer to beat a world chess champion under standard tournament time controls. This iconic moment was the first indication that artificial intelligence could outsmart humans.



© Alamy

10 May 1994

PRESIDENT MANDELA IS INAUGURATED

Nelson Mandela becomes the first Black president of South Africa after winning the country's first post-apartheid elections. Mandela had previously been imprisoned for 27 years for his anti-apartheid activism, and his election marked the beginning of multi-racial democracy in South Africa. He served as president for five years.

HEVER CASTLE

500th ANNIVERSARY

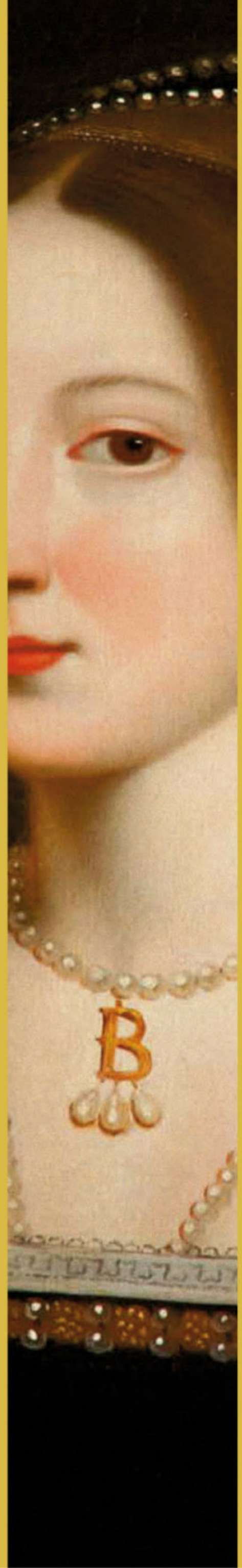
Becoming Anne

CONNECTIONS
CULTURE
COURT

NEW EXHIBITION
MARCH – NOVEMBER 2022

Explore the factors that moulded Anne Boleyn's character and the rise of the Boleyn family.

AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER



hevercastle.co.uk

ALL ABOUT

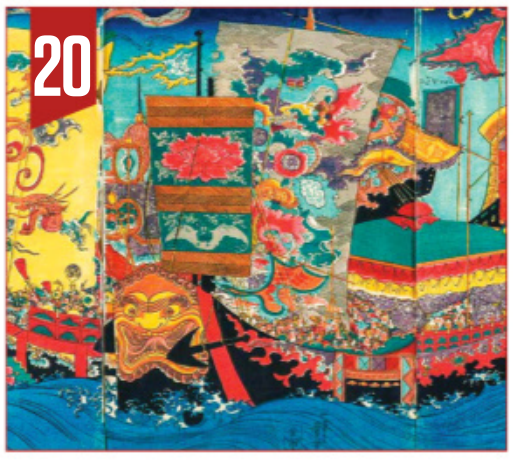
ANCIENT CHINA

From incredible technological advances to great philosophers, we explore China's earliest recorded history

14 INSIDE QIN SHI HUANG'S TOMB

16 ANATOMY OF A FOUR ARTS SCHOLAR

18 LEADING FIGURES OF ANCIENT CHINA



20 ANCIENT CHINA'S IMPACT ON HISTORY

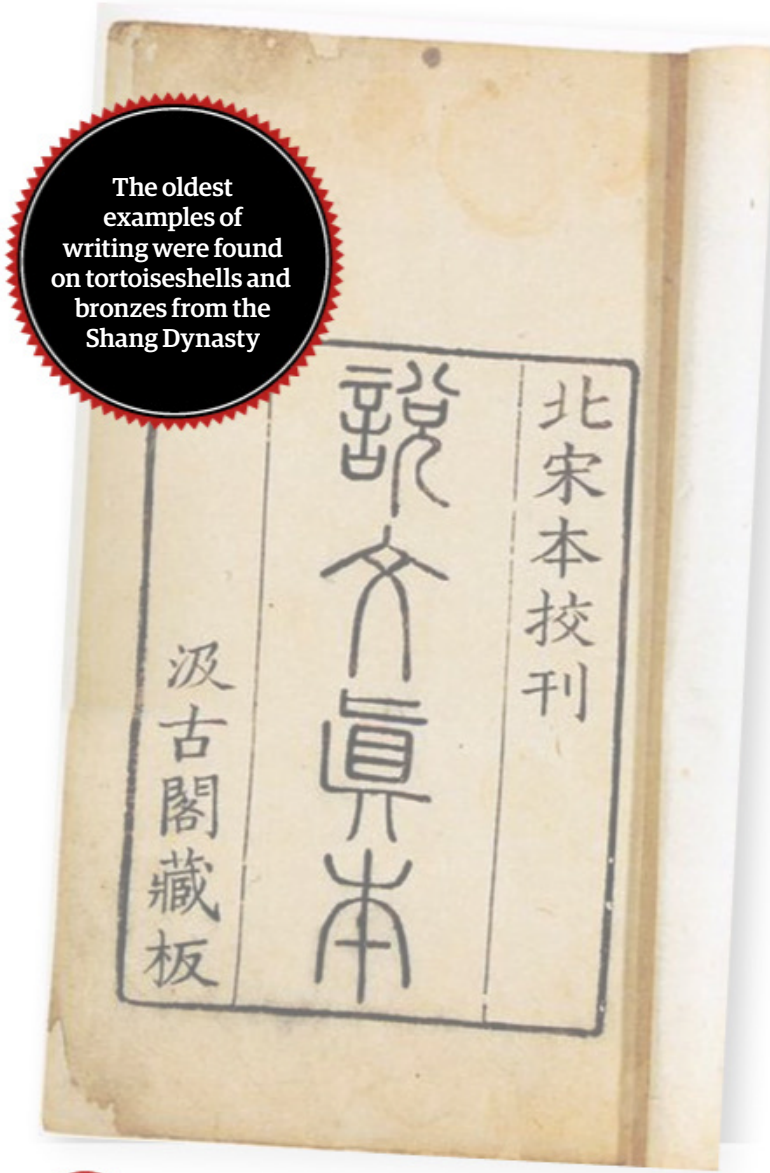
Main image source: © Alamy

Written by Mike Haskew, Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth

Key Events

8000 BCE EARLY SETTLEMENT

Settlers in the valley of the Yellow River and along the Yangtze River establish villages and begin the development of an agricultural society. Farming communities emerge in Henan Province and rice becomes a staple crop. Evidence of terraced farming remains.



The oldest examples of writing were found on tortoiseshells and bronzes from the Shang Dynasty

1300 BCE WRITING DEVELOPS IN THE SHANG DYNASTY

A system of writing begins to emerge during the Shang Dynasty and revolutionises the process of communication. Its far-reaching implications touch virtually every aspect of life in ancient China, from the recording of trade and commercial transactions to historical and legal documentation.

SILK FIRST MADE 4000 BCE

Evidence, including the cocoon of a moth cut with a knife, suggests that the earliest silk is made in the Xia area of Shanxi Province.

EMERGENCE OF SHANG DYNASTY 1600 BCE

Tribal chief Cheng Tang rules the Shang Dynasty, the earliest dynasty in China documented in recorded history. The period is marked by discoveries in astronomy and mathematics.

MANDATE OF HEAVEN 1050 BCE

King Wen of Zhou is the first to proclaim the Mandate of Heaven, a concept of divine rule that he invokes to justify the overthrow of the Shang Dynasty.

8000 BCE — 1300 BCE — 772 BCE

XIA DYNASTY 2100 BCE

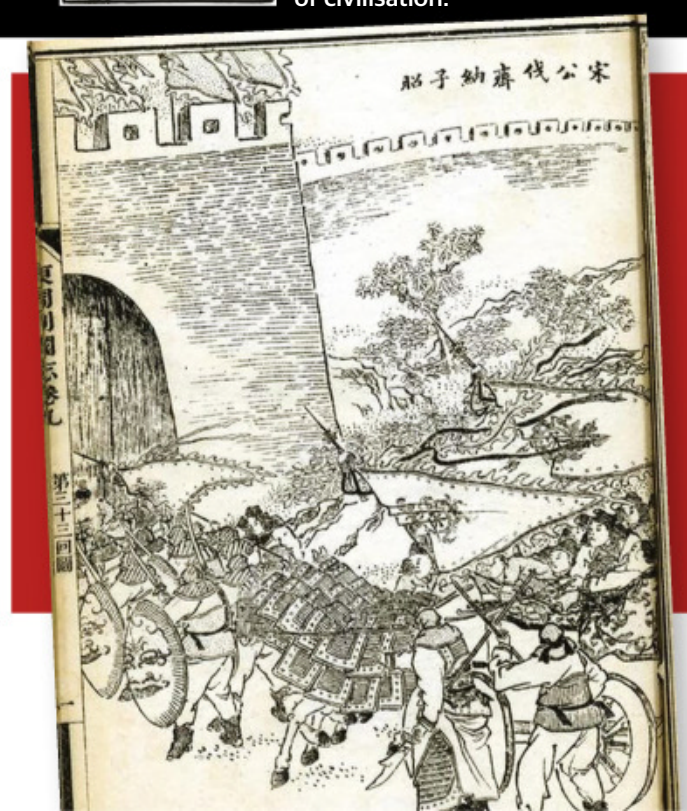
Rise of the Xia Dynasty under Emperor Yu. Archaeologists debate its existence, but legend claims the Xia Dynasty is the earliest in China's cradle of civilisation.

I-CHING IS WRITTEN 1150 BCE

The *I-Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, an ancient divination text and one of the five classics, is written. Interpretation of its readings influences later Chinese religions.

HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT 770 BCE

The Hundred Schools of Thought, a period of tremendous cultural and intellectual flowering, begins five centuries of influence. Confucianism, Legalism, Taoism and other theories subsequently emerge.



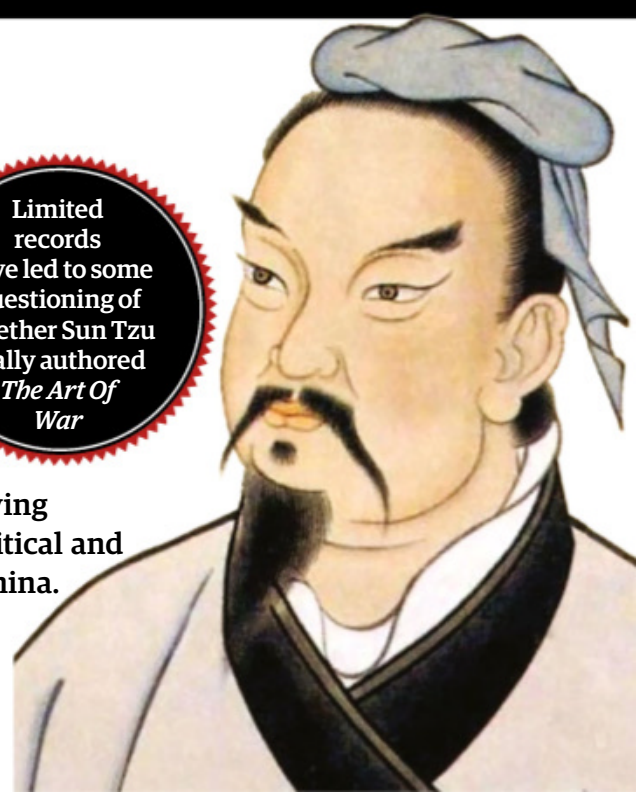
772 BCE SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD

The Spring and Autumn Period begins as royal authority over expanding feudal states begins to wane, leading to movement toward regional autonomy among some states of ancient China. The unrest persists for roughly three centuries during the Zhou Dynasty.

500 BCE FAMED PERSONS EXTANT

Sun Tzu, author of the historical classic *The Art of War*; Lao-Tzu, founder of Taoism, a religion stressing harmony with the universe; and relativist philosopher Teng Shih are living during a time of cultural, political and social flowering in ancient China.

Limited records have led to some questioning of whether Sun Tzu really authored *The Art Of War*



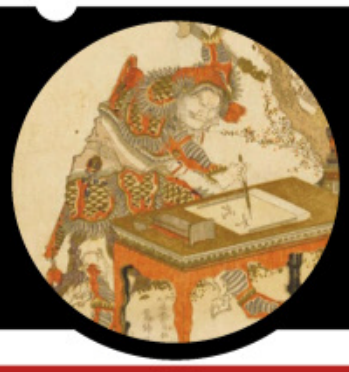
221 BC QIN DYNASTY PREEMINENT

China derives its name from this dynasty, pronounced "Chin," its first real empire. The Qin Dynasty only lasts from 221 BCE to 207 BCE but establishes the empire's approximate boundaries for the next two millennia. Extensions of a northern border wall mark the beginnings of work on the Great Wall.

© Getty Images

BIRTH OF CONFUCIUS 551 BCE

Confucius, the great philosopher, teacher and political figure, is born. His cultural perspectives shape Chinese thought, although he eventually lives in exile to escape political enemies.



WU CHU WARS 512 BCE

Climaxing with the decisive victory of Wu forces under Sun Tzu at Boju in 506 BCE, the Wu Chu Wars mark a rivalry between ancient states battling for supremacy in China.

500 BCE

WARRING STATES PERIOD 481 BCE

Approximately 250 years of warfare follows the Spring and Autumn Period in ancient China and gives rise to the Qin Dynasty, consolidating power through annexation of other states.

300 BCE

221 BCE

206 BCE

THE SILK ROAD 125 BCE

The fabled Silk Road evolves into an international trade route from China to the Middle East and eventually Europe, allowing commerce and cultural exchange to flourish.

INVENTION OF PAPER 105 BCE

The development of paper facilitates written records and early books. Paper is made with bamboo, hemp and other materials pounded into pulp and flattened.

300 BCE CAST IRON INVENTED

The process of cast iron brings applications for durable implements in warfare, agriculture, architecture and other activities. The Chinese develop a method of heat-treating that provides strength under compression hundreds of years before the same material is available in the West.

206 BCE TERRACOTTA SOLDIERS

Emperor Qin Shi Huang, first ruler of a unified ancient China, is buried in an elaborate tomb complex of his own construction at the base of Lishan Mountain. He is accompanied by a grandiose array of thousands of terracotta soldiers, chariots and horses.

The terracotta army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang includes over 7,000 soldiers, 600 horses and 100 chariots

All images: © Alamy

TOMB OF QIN SHI HUANG

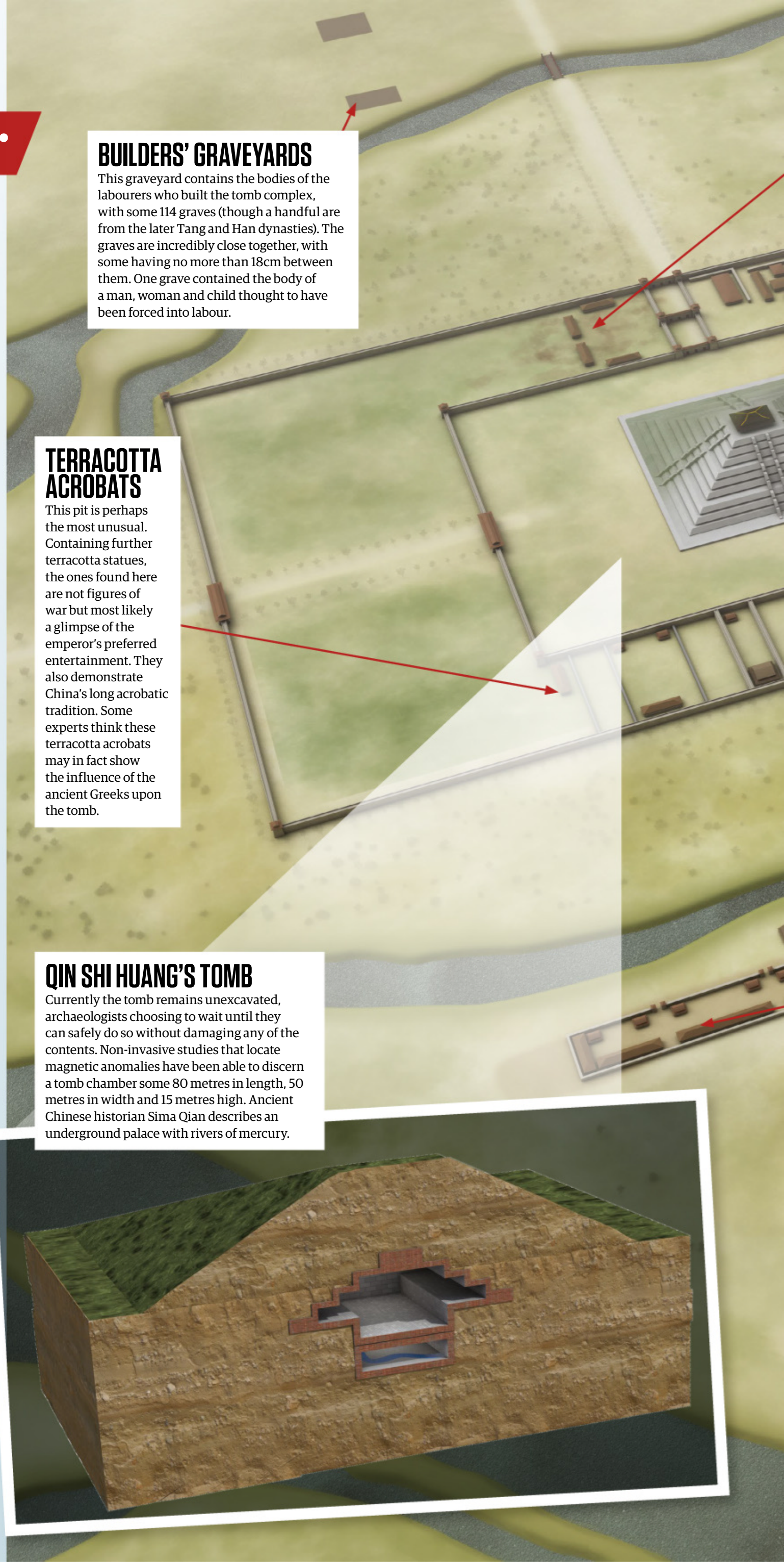
China
246 BCE – 208 BCE

In March 1974 a group of peasants digging a well discovered something extraordinary: fragments of a terracotta statue from deep within the ground. The following excavations uncovered thousands of terracotta soldiers, which have since been named one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century. But what were they doing there? And whose tomb were they protecting?

Qin Shi Huang was the first emperor of China, with a controversial reputation that remains even thousands of years after his death. He unified China in 221 BCE, effectively ending the period of the Warring States. He reformed the structure of China, creating a single currency, a language that could be read throughout the empire, and appointed officials based on ability over heritage. Yet he was also a ruthless man, banning all philosophies other than Legalism, on which his own was based, and using convicts in the construction of many of his fabulous palaces. Not to mention the vicious punishments he dished out to anyone who defied him.

Purportedly obsessed with immortality, Qin Shi Huang spent many years consulting magicians in an attempt to extend his life. Ironically, these attempts may have actually shortened it as it is thought an elixir he was given contained mercury. For someone who spent so much time trying to cheat death, he was intensely prepared for the afterlife and had constructed the largest tomb in Chinese history.

The tomb of Qin Shi Huang is a 52 square kilometre funerary complex, with much still unexcavated. The tomb was constructed over three decades and is known the world over for the thousands of terracotta statues discovered inside, placed to guard Qin Shi Huang in the afterlife. Archaeologists are hesitant to enter the tomb due to any damage they may cause in the process, but as technology develops it is hoped that they will one day be able to explore the entire site.



BUILDERS' GRAVEYARDS
This graveyard contains the bodies of the labourers who built the tomb complex, with some 114 graves (though a handful are from the later Tang and Han dynasties). The graves are incredibly close together, with some having no more than 18cm between them. One grave contained the body of a man, woman and child thought to have been forced into labour.

TERRACOTTA ACROBATS
This pit is perhaps the most unusual. Containing further terracotta statues, the ones found here are not figures of war but most likely a glimpse of the emperor's preferred entertainment. They also demonstrate China's long acrobatic tradition. Some experts think these terracotta acrobats may in fact show the influence of the ancient Greeks upon the tomb.

QIN SHI HUANG'S TOMB
Currently the tomb remains unexcavated, archaeologists choosing to wait until they can safely do so without damaging any of the contents. Non-invasive studies that locate magnetic anomalies have been able to discern a tomb chamber some 80 metres in length, 50 metres in width and 15 metres high. Ancient Chinese historian Sima Qian describes an underground palace with rivers of mercury.

RARE BIRD AND ANIMAL PITS

The largest of the 'accessory pits' (which contained items to accompany the emperor in the afterlife) contains a vast number of skeletons of rare animals and birds. Some coffins were found containing bodies that are believed to have been deer, as well as a number of kneeling statues; it's thought these statues are meant to represent the servants who fed the animals.

CONVICT LABOUR

Further burial places of workers forced to help in the building of the huge compound during its nearly three-decade construction were discovered here. The skeletons were found with iron collars and chains attached to them, leading archaeologists to speculate that the bodies buried here were most likely those of criminals pressed into hard labour.

UNDERGROUND PALACE

Discovered in 2012, this ancient palace is nearly 700 metres long and 250 metres wide. Experts describe it as something of a predecessor to the Forbidden City. Walls, gates, stone roads and pieces of broken pottery have all been found within the ruins, along with 18 courtyard-style houses and one main building.

MUTILATED SKELETONS

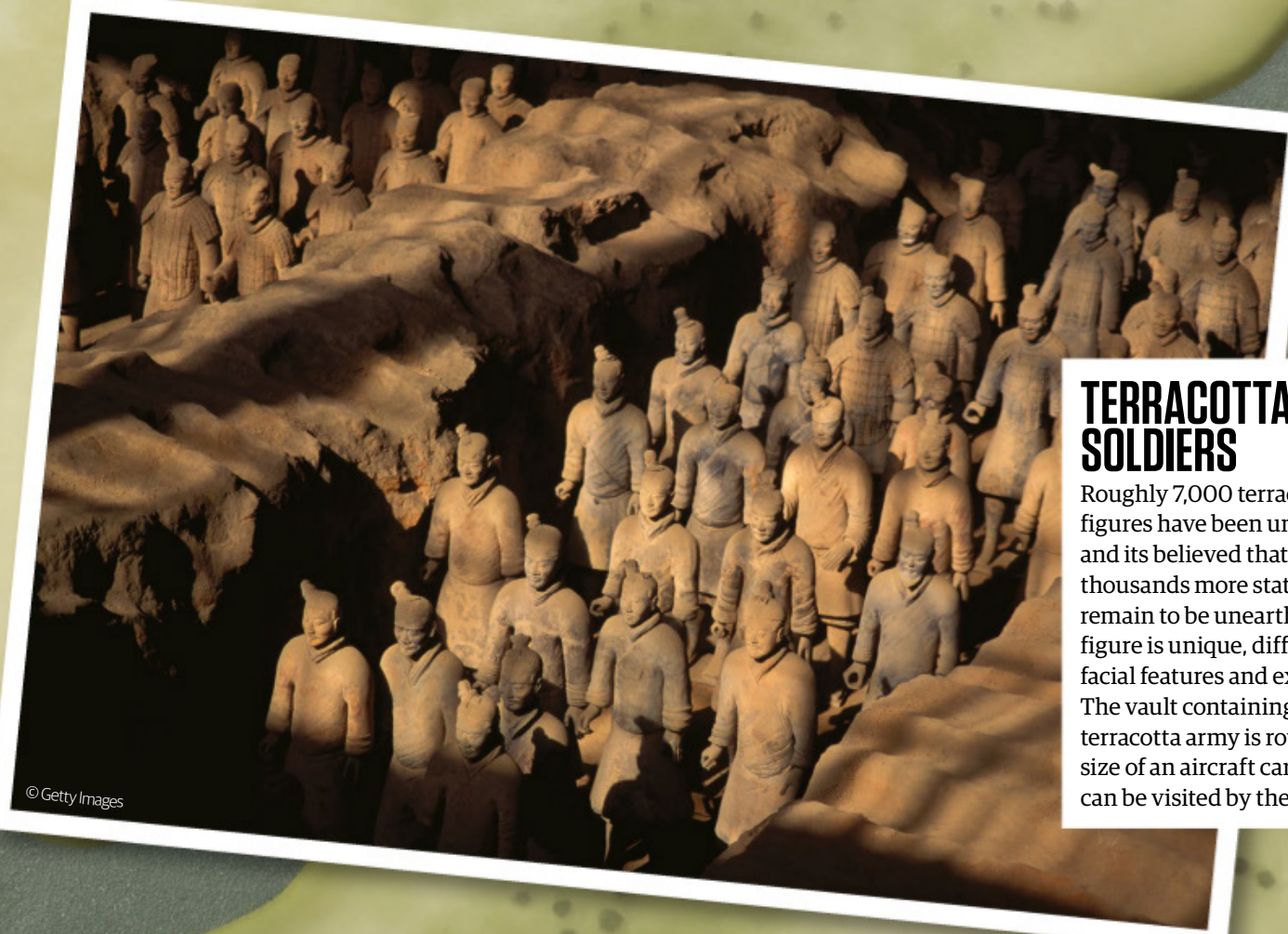
This area has about 100 tombs containing a number of mutilated skeletons, with bones lying scattered in the doorways to the chambers. It's thought these may be the remains of concubines who were placed in the tomb to serve the emperor in the next world. However, the violent nature of their demise makes it possible they were murdered by the emperor's successor in case any happened to be pregnant.

SLAUGHTER PITS

Located only 10 metres away from the stable pits, a total of 17 slaughter pits have been uncovered so far. Of the numerous skeletons within, most appear to have met violent deaths. It is suspected that these were princes, princesses and various royal ministers who would have been murdered upon the new emperor's ascension to the throne.

STABLE PITS

A total of 98 stable pits have been discovered, containing the skeletons of real horses and terracotta statues. Some 520 horse statues and 140 cavalry horses have been uncovered. Experts studying the animals' remains believe that some of the horses were tied down and buried alive.



© Getty Images

TERRACOTTA SOLDIERS

Roughly 7,000 terracotta figures have been uncovered and its believed that thousands more statues remain to be unearthed. Each figure is unique, differing in facial features and expression. The vault containing the terracotta army is roughly the size of an aircraft carrier and can be visited by the public.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

SCHOLAR OF THE FOUR ARTS

China
2000 - 200 BCE

THE FOUR ARTS

The four arts were the four artistic and intellectual accomplishments required of the ancient Chinese scholarly gentleman academic. The concept developed during the Tang dynasty, though each individual art has a rich history dating back much further.

PUTOU

Also known as a futou, this was a type of hat that would have been typically worn by government officials or other figures such as scholars. The putou later became extremely popular between the 6th and 10th centuries, spreading along the Great Silk Road.

PANLING LANSHAN

The panling lanshan, a wide-sleeved garment with a round collar, was first developed during the Tang dynasty. During this dynasty it was also the favoured garment of government officials as well as the Chinese academic scholar, although records of precise colour and design differ.

PAINTING

Chinese painting, or hua, was the fourth art of the Chinese scholar. Painting often demonstrated the same techniques mastered in calligraphy, with the same brush lines incorporated. Landscape painting first became popular in the Sui and Tang dynasties, and figure painting also began to develop during this period.

QIN INSTRUMENT

This seven silk-stringed instrument was believed to cultivate character and elevate the musician to a higher intellectual and spiritual level. Legend states that this instrument was created during the third millennium BCE, though early qins were different, being shorter and with ten strings.

A GAME OF GO

This strategy game was popular in ancient China, Korea and Japan. The aim of Go is not to capture your opponent's pieces, instead you attempt to encircle the empty territory on the board. By 500 BCE the game was considered one of the four arts, which led to it being targeted by Chairman Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

In ancient China, calligraphy (shu) was revered as a fine art long before painting. Early writing would most likely have been done on an oracle bone or bronze mould, and it was during the Han dynasty that Chinese calligraphy truly developed. Calligraphy, due to its high status as an art form, served to demonstrate the power of the scholar and the written word.

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

GOLD MASK OF SANXINGDUI

This mask belonged to an ancient Chinese civilisation China, c.1700 BCE – c.1150 BCE

The ruins of Sanxingdui were discovered by chance in 1927 by a farmer digging a trench in the city of Guanghan in the Sichuan province of China. What he found transformed our understanding of the ancient Chinese world. Originally thought to have existed only in the area of the Yellow River, the unique relics unearthed at Sanxingdui proved that another Chinese civilisation had occupied the area around the Yangtze River. The artefacts found at Sanxingdui (meaning 'three star mound') were of huge significance because they were unlike previous historic pieces from this era, pointing to this civilisation having its own culture and customs.

The relics found in the 1920s were added to in 1986 when two sacrificial pits containing gold, bronze, jade and pottery artefacts were uncovered at the site. These artefacts consisted of figures and busts that featured bulging eyes consistent with early descriptions of Cancong, the first king of the legendary Shu kingdom. This led archaeologists to conclude that Sanxingdui was the centre of this realm.

In 2021, additional pits were discovered at Sanxingdui containing more extraordinary antiquities. This gold mask, estimated to be 3,000 years old and excavated in June, is the most intact example of a mask from this civilisation. Weighing approximately 100g, the mask demonstrates the ability of the Shu people to work with gold. Another mask, similar to this one, was uncovered in March 2021 and weighed 286g even though it was incomplete. It has been suggested the missing half of the mask was destroyed by fire as other objects in the pits displayed signs of having been burned.

Other examples of gold masks found at Sanxingdui were intended to fit on the faces of bronze busts also discovered in the pits. These busts displayed the same exaggerated features as the masks, with some also showing the protruding eyes of Cancong. Dissimilar to anything seen before in Chinese cultural history, the faces of the Shu kingdom continue to astound archaeologists.

UNIQUE STYLE

The exaggerated characteristics of the mask are also a feature of lots of the bronze busts discovered in the sacrificial pits. This style is unique to the civilisation at Sanxingdui and has not been seen in any other ancient Chinese civilisation.

MATERIAL

The use of gold shows the people of the Shu kingdom were highly skilled craftsmen who had learned how to work with difficult materials to produce beautifully sculpted pieces of art.

PURPOSE

The mask is thought to be a purely decorative piece and would most likely have adorned the face of one of the bronze busts also uncovered at Sanxingdui. Together, they may have been used to pay tribute to Cancong.

EARRINGS

The holes in the ears of several of the gold and gold foil masks found at Sanxingdui suggest that the people of the Shu kingdom were accustomed to piercing their ears and wearing jewellery on them.

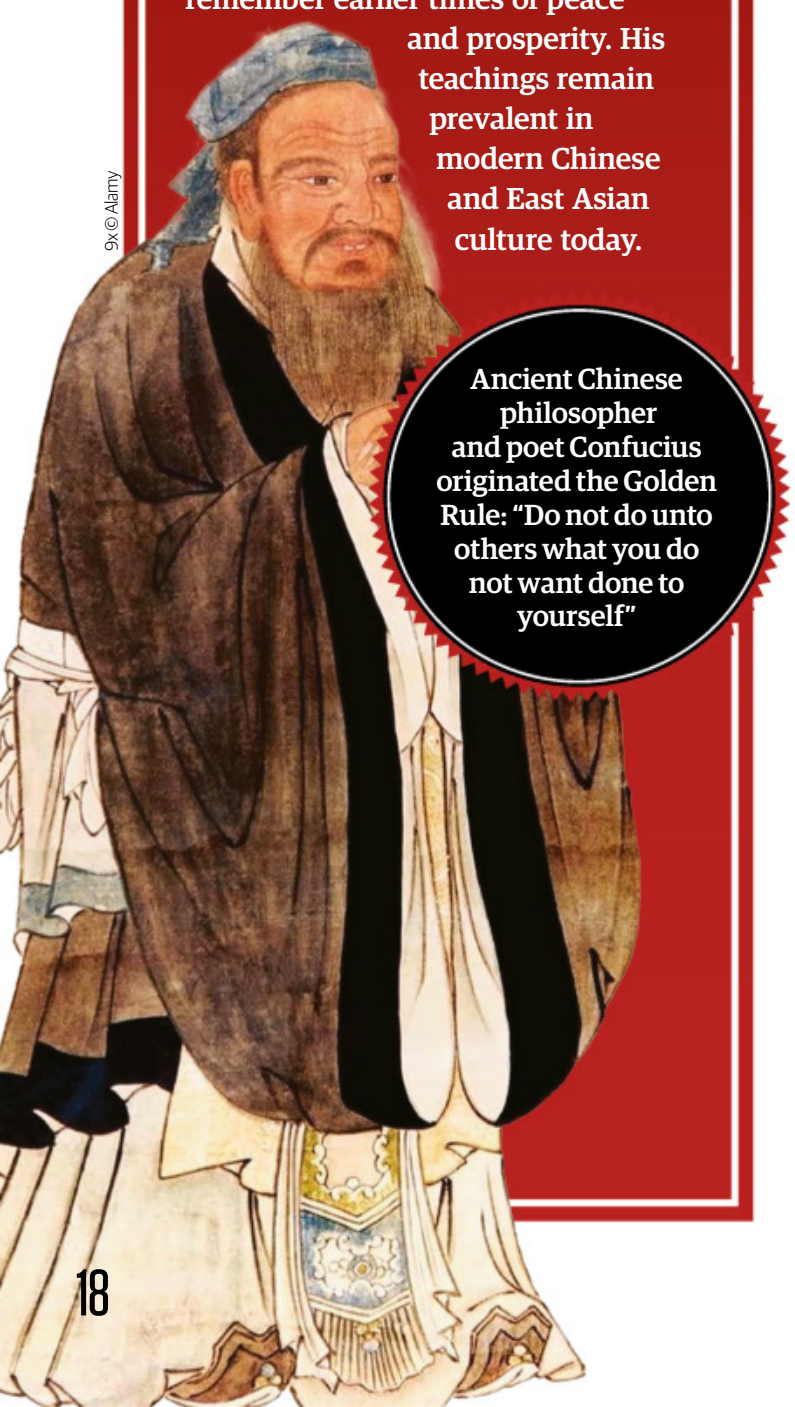
© Alamy

LEADING LIGHTS OF CHINA

Ten people who shaped the political, cultural, social and geographical foundations of the ancient kingdom

Confucius
551 BCE – 479 BCE

The most famous of Chinese philosophers, Confucius was also an influential politician and poet of the Spring and Autumn Period. With an emphasis on morality, justice and kindness in relationships, his teachings have been widely read through the ages. He was a strong proponent of loyalty and reverence for ancestors and is noted as the author of numerous classical Chinese literary works, including the *Five Classics*. Politically, he sought to restore the Mandate of Heaven and asked rulers and the people to remember earlier times of peace and prosperity. His teachings remain prevalent in modern Chinese and East Asian culture today.

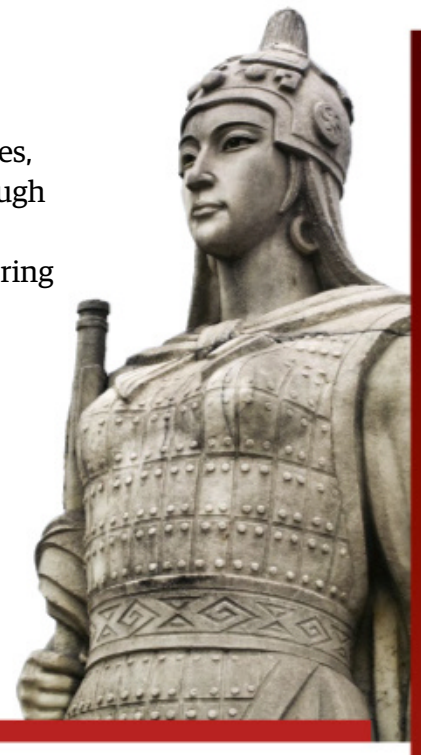


Ancient Chinese philosopher and poet Confucius originated the Golden Rule: "Do not do unto others what you do not want done to yourself"

9x © Alamy

FU HAO
UNKNOWN – C.1250 BCE

One of King Wu Ding's numerous wives, Fu Hao entered the ruling house through an arranged marriage intended to strengthen the allegiance of neighbouring clans. She rose to prominence as a military leader, commanding troops during long campaigns. Fu Hao was mother of the heir to the Shang Dynasty throne and a high priestess, participating in religious rituals. Her tomb, containing a trove of artefacts, was discovered during the mid-1970s. Inscriptions on oracle bones attest to her prominent role.



SUN TZU
544 BCE – 496 BCE

The author of the seminal work on military strategy and tactics, *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu, or Master Sun, lived during the Eastern Zhou period of ancient China. Sun Tzu is a prominent military and literary figure in Chinese history and is thought to have led soldiers in battle. While his theories on conflict, cooperation and society have been prominent in Asian thought for centuries, Western scholars popularised his writings in the 20th century, finding applications in everyday living.

EMPEROR YU THE GREAT
UNKNOWN – C.2025 BCE

Emperor Yu the Great is the semi-mythical king of the ancient Xia Dynasty, the earliest in Chinese history and whose existence is the substance of scholarly debate. Yu is credited with establishing Xia and the tradition of dynastic rule in China, and is believed to have exerted great effort to implement flood control along the Yellow River. Revered as an upright and moral ruler, he earned the nickname 'Tamer of Waters' and promoted the establishment of villages and agricultural practices through his outstanding leadership, project management and problem solving capabilities.

Ban Zhao
49 CE – 120 CE

Ban Zhao is considered one of the first female historians and was also a prominent politician and philosopher. The daughter of the influential historian Ban Biao, she completed the history of Western Han, the *Book of Han*, begun by her brother, Ban Gu. Ban Zhao was also the author of *Lessons for Women*, a guide to the conduct of women in ancient Chinese society. She also developed a keen interest in mathematics and astronomy. Ban Zhao became the most influential female scholar of her day, wrote poetry and commentaries, and advised the Han court on numerous matters, including Taoist sexual practices.

Ban Zhao gained great political influence by teaching in the royal library

LAO TZU

C.500 BCE – LATE 4TH CENTURY BCE

The founder of the philosophical school of Taoism, Lao Tzu is the historically acknowledged author of the *Tao Te Ching*. The figure of Lao Tzu is surrounded by legend, and some scholars of ancient China theorise that the actual individual behind the persona was in fact Li Er, a high-ranking figure in the court of King Wu of Zhou who served as head of the royal library. Another legend describes an encounter between Lao Tzu and Confucius, in which the latter stood in awe of Tzu's knowledge and wisdom.

KING WEN OF ZHOU

1152 BCE – 1050 BCE

The first emperor to claim rule via the Mandate of Heaven, Wen of Zhou espoused the divine right to govern through natural order and the will of the universe. Many writings in classical Chinese poetry praise Wen, and he is considered by some historians as the first epic hero of ancient China. Through sound economic policy he engendered prosperity among the people, while military campaigns extended the Zhou Dynasty's territory.

Zhang Heng

78 CE – 139 CE

© Getty Images

Zhang Heng lived during the Han Dynasty, rising to prominence as an astronomer, writer, engineer and mathematician. He came to the imperial court and fashioned calendars for emperors, although he was not born of a royal family. He practised Confucianism and declined promotion to posts of greater responsibility, claiming he had little ambition. During his lifetime Zhang Heng invented a water-powered armillary sphere – a device used in astronomy – and mathematical equations to calculate the volume of three-dimensional objects.

ZHUANG ZHOU

369 BCE – 286 BCE

Zhuang Zhou was a Chinese philosopher of the Hundred Schools of Thought, influential during the concurrent Warring States Period. He is remembered as the author of one of the basic texts of Taoism, the *Zhuangzi*. His works have been acknowledged as influencing Western thinkers as well, and though his actual existence has been questioned by modern scholars he is believed to have served as a government official in the state of Song.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang was obsessed with achieving immortality, seeking the mythical elixir of life while taking poisonous mercury pills intended to make him immortal

Emperor Qin Shi Huang

259 BCE – 210 BCE

Considered by many scholars to be the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang was also the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, coming to the throne at the tender age of 13 and asserting control at the age of 38. From 220 BCE to 210 BCE, Qin Shi Huang succeeded in unifying the seven warring states of ancient China. He began the construction of the Great Wall as a defensive measure against invasion from the north, established a universally accepted currency, and standardised units of measure. The emperor is famous for being buried with the terracotta army of thousands of soldiers, horses and chariots, which was discovered by chance in 1974 in the Shaanxi province.

ANCIENT CHINA'S IMPACT ON HISTORY

Dr Roel Sterckx discusses the origins of Ancient China, its evolution and its influence on the wider world

What prompted you to pursue the study of China and its history?
It's a combination of coincidence and where I grew up – a small village in northeast Belgium – and an interest in studying languages. At 18 I was determined to study classics or European history. Then, I thought I would simply become a high school teacher in the same town I grew up in. So there was a desire to study a place far away – to get me out of the village. This was in the 1980s when China had been opening up, and it didn't sound totally exotic to study the Chinese. So I said, "Let's go for the equivalent civilisation at the other end of the planet, Ancient China, an alternative way of studying ancient civilisations."

Why is there controversy regarding the beginnings of Ancient China?
The controversy lies in how you define history versus prehistory, and if you look at writing as the first evidence for a chronicle you could argue that the writing system of Ancient China is not as old as that of the Babylonians, for example. So Chinese historians have always wished to push back into prehistory, to centuries in which we have material evidence like terracotta vessels and all types of material – food remains, tombs and jade objects – but nothing that resembles writing, although some Chinese historians would like rudimentary drawings and things to be considered writing. A project was launched in China years ago to prove there was a dynasty before the oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty, pushing into the past. But there is no historical evidence of the Xia Dynasty. We have evidence that there were civilisations, human communities, and there have been discoveries of fascinating pockets that took place around the particular Xia society, but if you have to start a chronology somewhere, historians go back to writing as the first kind of point of departure.

Dr Roel Sterckx is the Joseph Needham Professor of Chinese History, Science and Civilisation at Cambridge University, and a fellow of Clare College. He served as Secretary-General of the European Association for Chinese Studies 2006-12 and was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 2013. He is the author of several works, most recently the 2019 book *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Cook Ding*.

What's the impact of Ancient Chinese history through the centuries?
The centuries roughly from 9th BCE to the unification of the empire in the 2nd century BCE were the formative centuries of what Chinese civilisation would become for 2.5 millennia. The emergence of the great philosophers and classics, and political thinking that would become canonised like DNA to inscribe itself into the training of literate Chinese elites for centuries to come. It was also the period of foundational texts of state formation, rulership and the military strategy of Sun Tzu. We see a towering figure in Confucius in the 6th century BCE, and this is the period that China moves from a confederation of feudal, warring states, gradually transforming into a unified empire with a legal system, sophisticated bureaucracy, and unification of writing systems, weights and measures. This period is the laboratory of core ideas in later Chinese political thought. The first traces of landmarks like the Great Wall go back to this time.

What scientific advances were there in Ancient China?
If you look at the great advances in terms of science, invention or innovation, you have to look at things such as hydraulics and the way in which a water clock measures time, for example, and look at the very sophisticated astronomical observations describing the sky in great detail. The classics of Chinese medicine came together in the 1st century BCE. Theories about the body, acupuncture and the very first attempts to catalogue

Photo courtesy of: Edward Thompson

the natural world in encyclopedic texts appeared. Bronze casting was another advance that occurred.

How important was the turbulent Warring States Period?

The period of four or five centuries leading up to the unification of China is known as the Warring States period, a very good name to describe it, and the map consisted of a number of warring states – seven near the end. First of all, they defined the duty of the state to engage in warfare and expand territory, and the leaders conceived of themselves as heads of territorial states with standing armies. The warlords fought it out with each other, using the advice of travelling 'salespeople' that became court advisors. The state of Qin in the very west of the map basically got the upper hand and ran over the other states, moving west to east with unification, and founded the first empire.

What about the transition from the Qin Dynasty to the Han Dynasty?

The state of Qin was so successful because of its formidable army and harsh political doctrine, which later historians define as Legalism. One monarch, an autocrat, controls the reins of power with two things: punish those who disagree and reward those who do agree. But it lasted for barely two decades. Then the House of Han overthrew Qin, and the Han Dynasty lasted nearly four centuries. That was the first consolidated, long-lived Chinese empire.

What common misconception seems to pervade the general understanding of China in the West?

Something the general public often overlooks is that when we hear about China we think of one unit and a massive empire of a country that never changed. But if you actually break down the chronology of Chinese history, the map has had as many periods of division as unity. The obligation of the imperial centre to keep the empire together has been the overall challenge from ancient times to, you could argue, the present, because China today still very much consists of regions and that has always been the case.

How would you advise Western educational institutions to approach Ancient China's history?

It's vitally important because Ancient China is the period that saw the birth of core political and ethical ideas that have shaped Chinese thinking, rulership and social organisation for centuries. We have only tended to be interested in China in the West from the moment China is economically relevant or dangerous to us. In many history books if China is mentioned at all, it starts with the Opium Wars and then the 20th century and the Communists and Maoists. In high school and university curricula, it would be the equivalent of starting to teach Western history in 1914; never mind the Romans and Greeks or the Renaissance since they were around such a long time ago.

2x © Alamy

ABOVE A bronze vessel from the Warring States period of Ancient China's history, around the 5th century BCE

BELOW A legend of the Qin Dynasty tells of how its first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, had ships built to search for the secret of immortality

CHINESE THOUGHT: FROM CONFUCIUS TO COOK DING BY ROEL STERCKX IS OUT NOW FROM PELICAN

RUINS OF ANCIENT CHINA

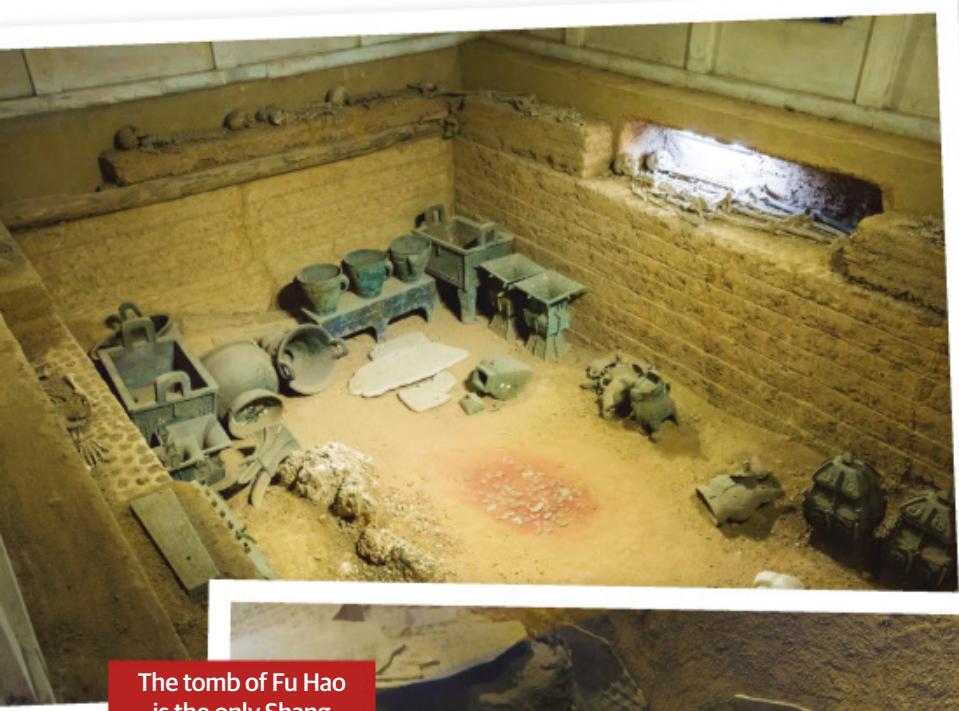
Five lost cities and archaeological ruins of ancient China

© Getty Images

1 RUINS OF YIN
HENAN

The ruins of Yin are situated on the banks of the Huang He River in Henan Province, and a number of historic documents show that the city was once the capital of the late Shang Dynasty (1300 BCE to 1046 BCE). This makes it the first capital city in Chinese history. Covering roughly four square kilometres, the capital lasted around 255 years and 12 kings across some eight generations.

One of the most significant finds from the Yin site are inscribed oracle bones that, according to UNESCO, contain the earliest evidence of the Chinese written language. Artefacts found at the site also provide evidence of the use of both the solar and lunar calendar during this period, as well as the ability of its occupants to cast bronze. The site also contains evidence of human sacrifice taking place, with a number of 'sacrificial pits' containing human remains and also chariots. A number of royal tombs and palaces, prototypes of later Chinese architecture, have been unearthed here. The site also features the tomb of Fu Hao, the only Shang Dynasty royal tomb to have been discovered intact.



The tomb of Fu Hao is the only Shang Dynasty tomb to have been found intact

2 KAIFENG UNDERGROUND CITY
HENAN

The ruins of Kaefing are a rare example of cities having been built on top of each other

Over a period of around 2,000 years, stretching the period of the Warring States (475 BCE – 221 BCE) all the way to the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911), the six cities of Kaifeng were steadily built one on top of the other. This is highly unusual in ancient China but the suspected reason is due to Kaifeng's lying on the south bank of the Yellow River, which makes the area highly susceptible to flooding. In ancient China, if a capital of a dynasty fell during conflict, the capital of the succeeding dynasty was built elsewhere and the ruins of the previous capital were abandoned. But flooding from the river buried Kaifeng under mud on several occasions and the subsequent cites were just built one on top of the other. What results from this is an incredibly rich archeological find that has provided archaeologists with a wealth of information regarding ancient China. In 2012 the 'City upon a City' Xinzheng Gate project was launched to begin excavating the site at Kaefing.

A view of the ruins of Liangzhu

3 LIANGZHU RUINS
LIANGZHU

Neolithic in origin, the city of Liangzhu lasted roughly a thousand years, from around 3300 BCE to 2300 BCE. According to UNESCO, the ancient city "illustrates the transition from small-scale Neolithic societies to a large integrated political unit with hierarchy, rituals and crafts." As such, Liangzhu is a fascinating example of a previous culture transitioning into an early Ancient Chinese city.

The city was primarily an agricultural site and used the cultivation of rice as its main source of income. Throughout its development Liangzhu formed a defined social class system as well as a single system of belief. There are several main surviving elements to Liangzhu, including the ruins of the city, a water conservancy system and a cemetery graded by social class. Mysteriously, around 2300 BCE the Liangzhu culture seemed to disappear off the face of the Earth and the magnificent city was abandoned. Some suspect this may have been from flooding due to its location in the Yangtze River Basin.

In 2019 the city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, with the organisation stating: "These ruins are an outstanding example of early urban civilisation."

4 SANXINGDUI RUINS
SICHUAN PROVINCE

The Sanxingdui ruins are some of the most mysterious and fascinating archaeological sites of all ancient China. Following its initial discovery in 1927, the site garnered the interest of the archaeological community in 1986 when two sacrificial pits uncovered a wealth of buried artefacts. This discovery challenged the traditional narrative of ancient Chinese history, which suggests that Chinese culture spread from the central plain and out along the Yellow River. It is due to this discovery that historians now discuss the possibility of numerous areas that can be considered jointly important in the birth of Chinese civilisation.

A 2020 exhibition in Shanghai showcased artefacts discovered at Sanxingdui

Contemporaneous with the Shang Dynasty (roughly existing between 1700 BCE – 1150 BCE) the culture at Sanxingdui is different and developed a different method of bronze-making. The culture at Sanxingdui has no surviving written records and appears to have existed for a around 500 years before disappearing entirely. As recent as 2021, more sacrificial pits were discovered at the site containing even more relics and artefacts, including a 3,000-year-old gold mask.

5 JINSHA RUINS
CHENGDU

Following the collapse of Sanxingdui, Jinsha became the capital of the Shu state and the centre of ancient civilisation in the upper Yangtze River area. Unearthed accidentally in 2001 during construction work, the site spans roughly five square kilometres and is believed the have flourished between the 12th and 7th centuries BCE, with the majority of relics discovered here dating from the late Shang and Zhou dynasties. The Jinsha culture finally disappeared between 500 BCE and 200 BCE due to either political turmoil or flooding.

The unearthed Jinsha site includes large building foundations, the sacrificial zone, residential sites and large burial grounds, as well as a variety of gold objects, including two striking gold masks. Many artefacts made from jade and ivory have also been found here. Jinsha is considered the first major Chinese archaeological discovery of the 21st century and its museum tells the story of the ancient city and the surrounding Chengdu area, and displays many of the rare artefacts. (See english.jinshasitemuseum.com for more information.)

The impressive ruins of Jinsha

One of the striking gold masks discovered at the Jinsha site

8x © Alamy

SUBSCRIBE TO ALL ABOUT HISTORY

LIMITED TIME OFFER!

TO ORDER ONLINE VISIT

www.magazinesdirect.com/aah/A15X

OR CALL 0330 333 1113 AND QUOTE **A15X**

REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE...

- Brilliant value – save money on the cover price
- You'll never miss an issue
- It's delivered direct to your front door

CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE

3 MONTH PRINT EDITION

SAVE 34%

£11.75 EVERY 3 MONTHS

13 issues of **All About History** in print over 12 months

ANNUAL PRINT + DIGITAL

SAVE 50%

£61.50 EVERY 12 MONTHS

13 issues of **All About History** over 12 months in print and digital

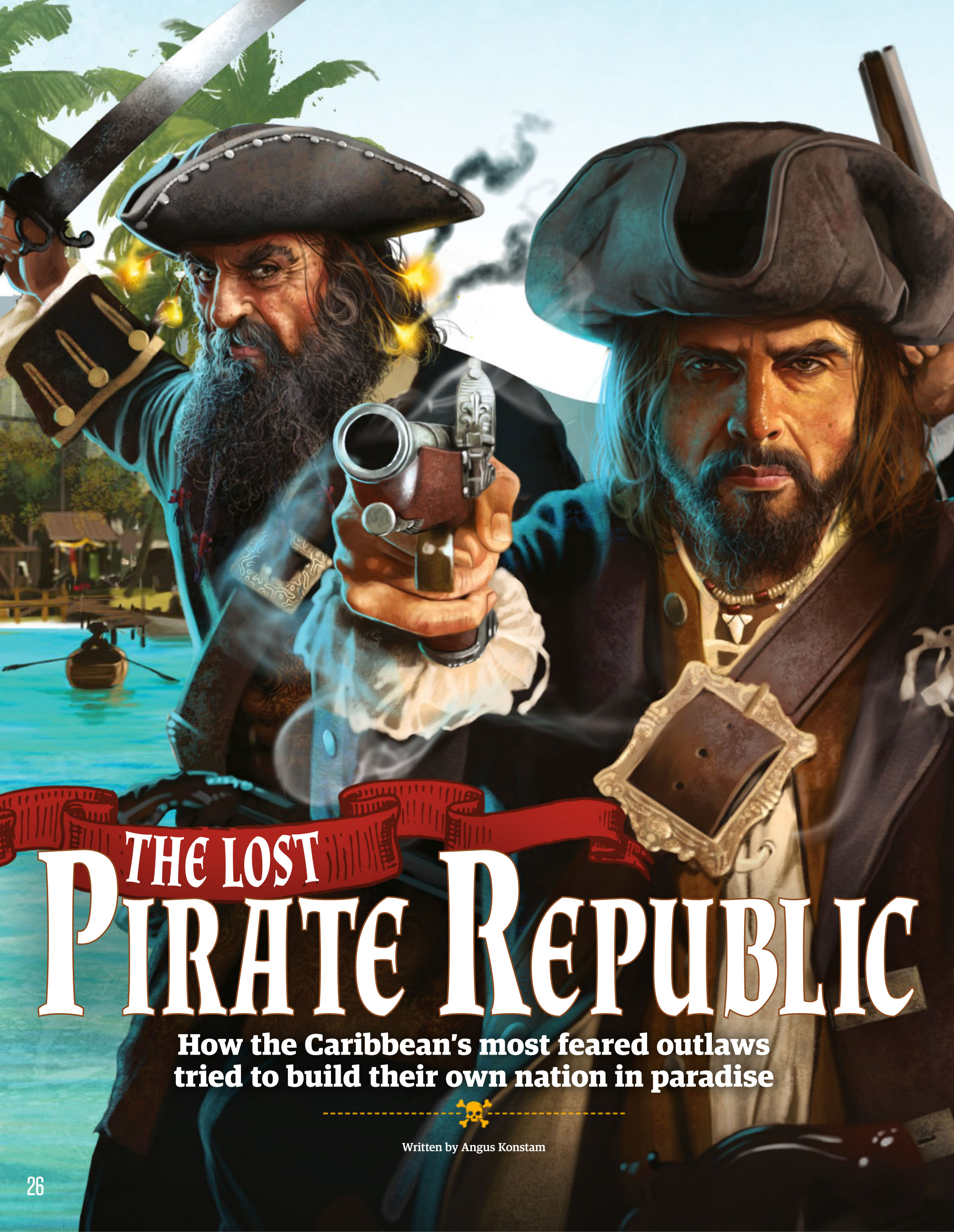
3 MONTH DIGITAL EDITION

SAVE 34%

£8.50 EVERY 3 MONTHS

13 issues of **All About History** in digital format

***Terms and conditions:** Offer closes 31st May 2022. Offer open to new UK subscribers only. Pricing is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate is for 12 months (13 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday- Friday 9am- 5pm UK Time or e-mail: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.



THE LOST PIRATE REPUBLIC

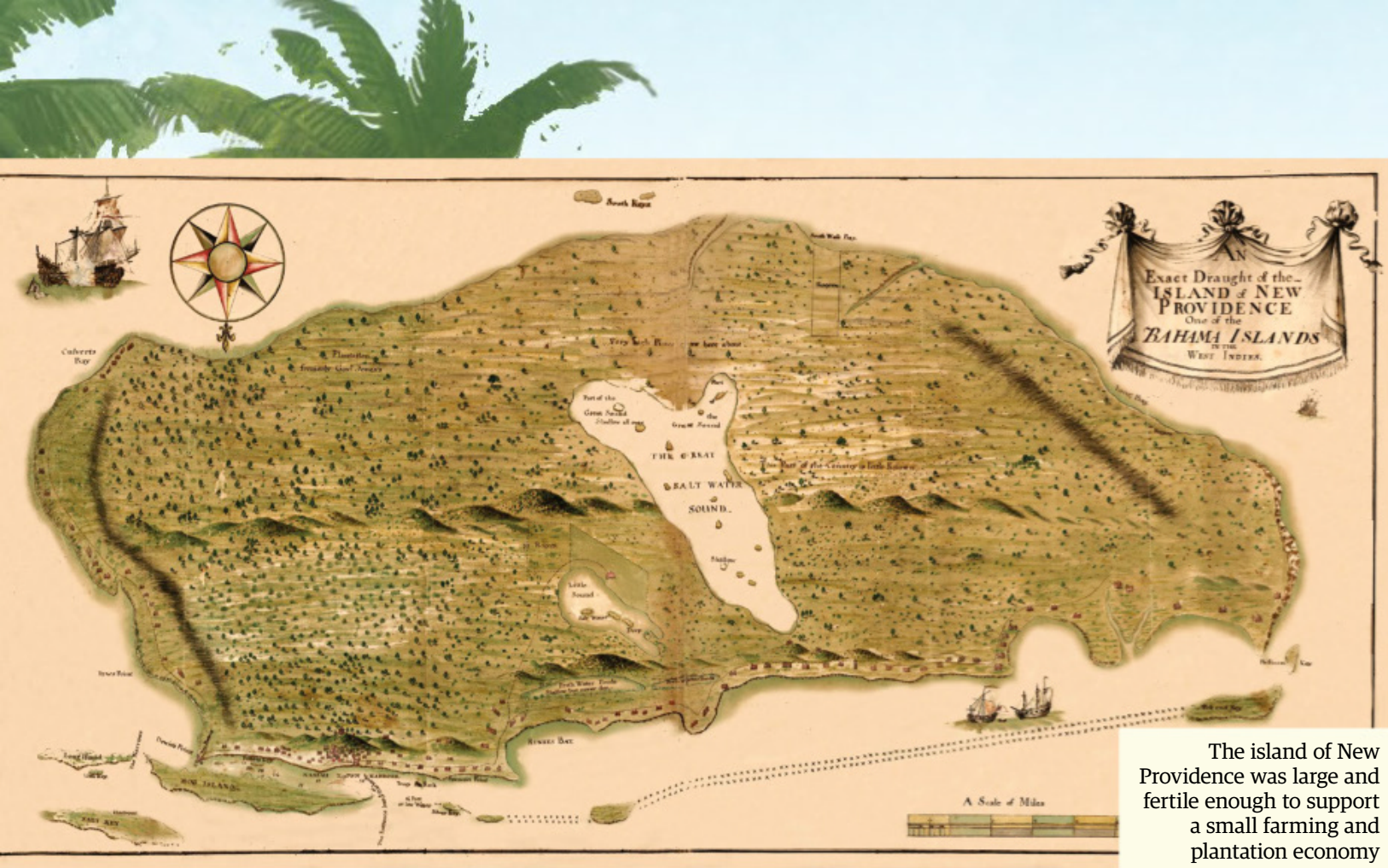
How the Caribbean's most feared outlaws tried to build their own nation in paradise

Written by Angus Konstam

During the early 18th century a major increase in piratical attacks occurred. It disrupted maritime trade in American waters and markedly drove up marine insurance rates. The first significant attacks began around 1714, and they continued for the best part of a decade. The economic impact was just part of the problem – this upsurge of piracy appeared to be self-perpetuating. Often, on ships captured by pirates some of the crew would volunteer to join the ranks of their assailants. These recruits increased the scale of the pirate problem, and soon the impact of piracy was being felt in other regions, such as off the West African coast and the Indian Ocean.

While this was devastating enough for the shipping industry in both Europe and the Americas, it also began to concern those in power. In a growing

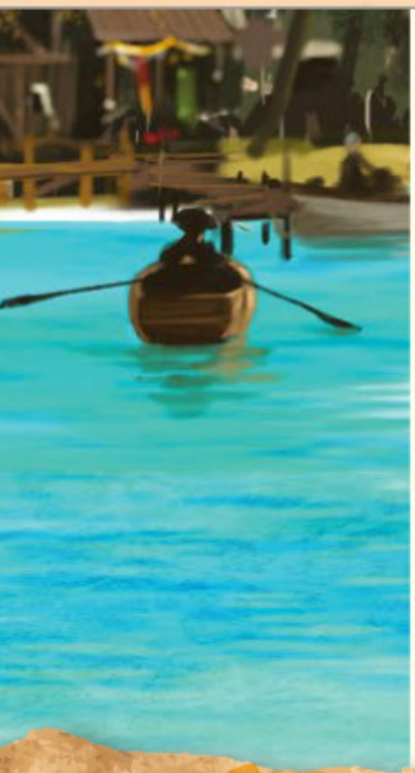
Illustration by: Joe Cummings



The island of New Providence was large and fertile enough to support a small farming and plantation economy

HENRY JENNINGS
Unknown – c.1745

Jennings' raid on a wrecked Spanish treasure fleet helped to finance the pirate haven of Nassau when he joined up with Hornigold and his crews. Despite the bitter rivalry between the two captains, they managed to operate together as the 'Flying Gang' for a time. Like Hornigold, he accepted the royal pardon in 1718 and retired to Bermuda.



number of instances, captains whose ships had been attacked reported that the pirates had abused them, both physically and verbally, while accusing them of cruelty to their crew and to seamen in general. While this resentment towards authority was primarily directed at the captains, it was clear that it extended to national governments and even civilised society as a whole. It almost seemed as if once a seaman had become a pirate, he had rejected the very fabric of contemporary social order. This, of course, posed a threat to the existing establishment, both in Europe and its colonies. It also suggested that the pirate scourge had a radical element to it.

THE SPARK OF RADICALISM

One reason for this might possibly be traced to piracy's origin. In April 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht brought an end to the War of the Spanish Succession (1700-14). More to the point, it ended the war between France and Britain; peace with Spain would soon follow, but the war between France and Austria would continue until the following March. Word of the Utrecht treaty reached Jamaica followed by news that peace had also been agreed with Spain. The long-running war had been good for the island. For almost a decade-and-a-half the old Jamaican buccaneering haven of Port Royal had served as a base for British privateers – sea rovers who carried Letters of Marque empowering them to prey on enemy ships in time of war.

This had been extremely lucrative for the privateering captains and their crews, for the investors who provided the funding for their ventures, and for the British crown, which garnered 20 percent of the profits. Fortunes were made from this form of licenced piracy, and the only victims were the French and Spanish. The coming of peace, though, brought this profitable business to an abrupt end. Letters of Marque were now worthless, and the privateers suddenly found themselves out of a job.

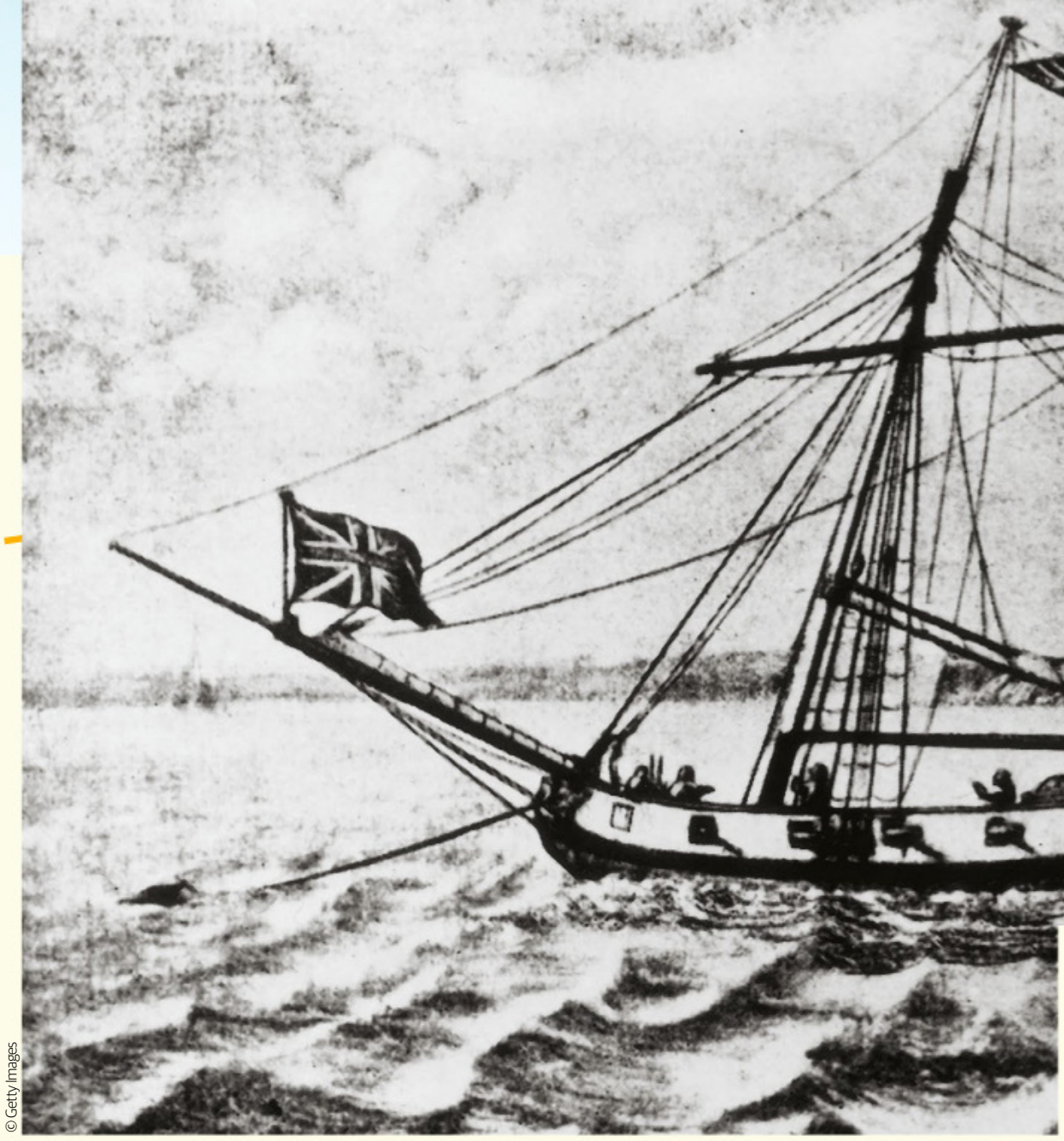
Some found it hard to abandon their old ways. A number of them continued their attacks without the protection of licences and were duly branded as pirates. That meant that Port Royal was now closed to them and their kind, and they were forced to look elsewhere for a safe haven. Most, though, reluctantly signed on as crewmen on merchant ships. After the war the number of British

WHY NASSAU?
The Bahamas became a haven for pirates

The Bahamas were something of a backwater in this period. In the aftermath of their discovery by Columbus in 1492 they had been almost completely depopulated, as the Spanish used the archipelago as a source of slaves. The Spanish never made a serious attempt to colonise the islands but retained a claim to them until 1783. Although the French and the English tried to settle there, it was the English who made the first serious attempt, establishing themselves on the islands they called New Providence and Eleuthera. These settlers eked out a precarious living from fishing and farming and the settlements survived, despite the depredations of the Spanish, who saw the English as interlopers.

The largest settlement was Charles Town on New Providence, which in 1695 was renamed Nassau in honour of the Dutch-born King William III. An English governor was sent there too, and a fort was built to protect Nassau from further Spanish attacks. At the start of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1700 Nassau also became a minor base for English privateers. Neither move really helped – Nassau's fort was abandoned in 1703 after yet another Franco-Spanish attack and the privateers found safer havens. After that, the settlements were largely abandoned and by the end of the war in 1713 barely a hundred settlers remained.

This, though, made New Providence a perfect secluded pirate base. After all, the islands lay close to the busy shipping lanes of the Straits of Florida and the Bahamas Channel. It was here in late 1713 that the privateer-turned-pirate Benjamin Hornigold came and established himself in Nassau. With that, these sleepy islands were reinvented as a pirate lair.



© Getty Images

"PRIVATEERSMEN ENJOYED BETTER CONDITIONS THAN MERCHANT SEAMEN, AND COULD LOOK FORWARD TO A SHARE OF ANY PRIZE MONEY"

merchantmen increased markedly, and as the Jamaican economy returned to a peacetime footing there was no shortage of work. However, a few lucky former privateersmen, like Captain Henry Jennings, were employed by the Jamaican governor Lord Archibald Hamilton, who needed a small naval force to protect the island and its trade.

The trouble was, during their time as privateersmen these sailors had become used to a shipboard system far removed from that found on merchant ships. Privateersmen enjoyed better conditions than merchant seamen and could look forward to a share of any looted treasure and money. Now, after signing on to a merchant vessel, poor conditions and low pay were commonplace. Worse still was the authoritarian system on board, where the captain's word was law and frequently harsh discipline was meted out on seamen at the captain's command. Many sailors came to resent their new lot and yearned for their lost freedom. This, then, was the real spark that ignited the low-key radicalism that came to be associated with contemporary pirates.

SAM BELLAMY 1689 – 1717

Bellamy started his pirate career under Hornigold and Teach before getting his first command. Although he was only a pirate captain for around a year, 'Black Sam' managed to rob more than 50 ships and was celebrated as one of the most generous and merciful pirates of the time. He modelled himself on the English folklore character Robin Hood.

5x © Alamy

TOP The most common form of pirate vessel of this period was the small single-masted sloop of the kind pictured here, c.1717

ABOVE Edward Teach, popularly known as 'Blackbeard', is arguably the most famous of the Nassau pirates thanks largely to his ferocious appearance

THE FIRST PIRATES OF NASSAU

The first pirates arrived in Nassau in the Bahamas during the latter half of 1713, the year of the peace deal. At their head was Benjamin Hornigold, a former privateering captain from Jamaica. He hadn't let the cancellation of his Letter of Marque prevent him from continuing his attacks, though he was also scrupulous about only targeting the ships of his former enemies. As Port Royal was closed to him, Hornigold relocated to Nassau, accompanied by those who shared his casual attitude towards legal niceties.

What they found there was a dilapidated fort, its guns spiked by the Spanish and their carriages rotted. The settlement was little better and

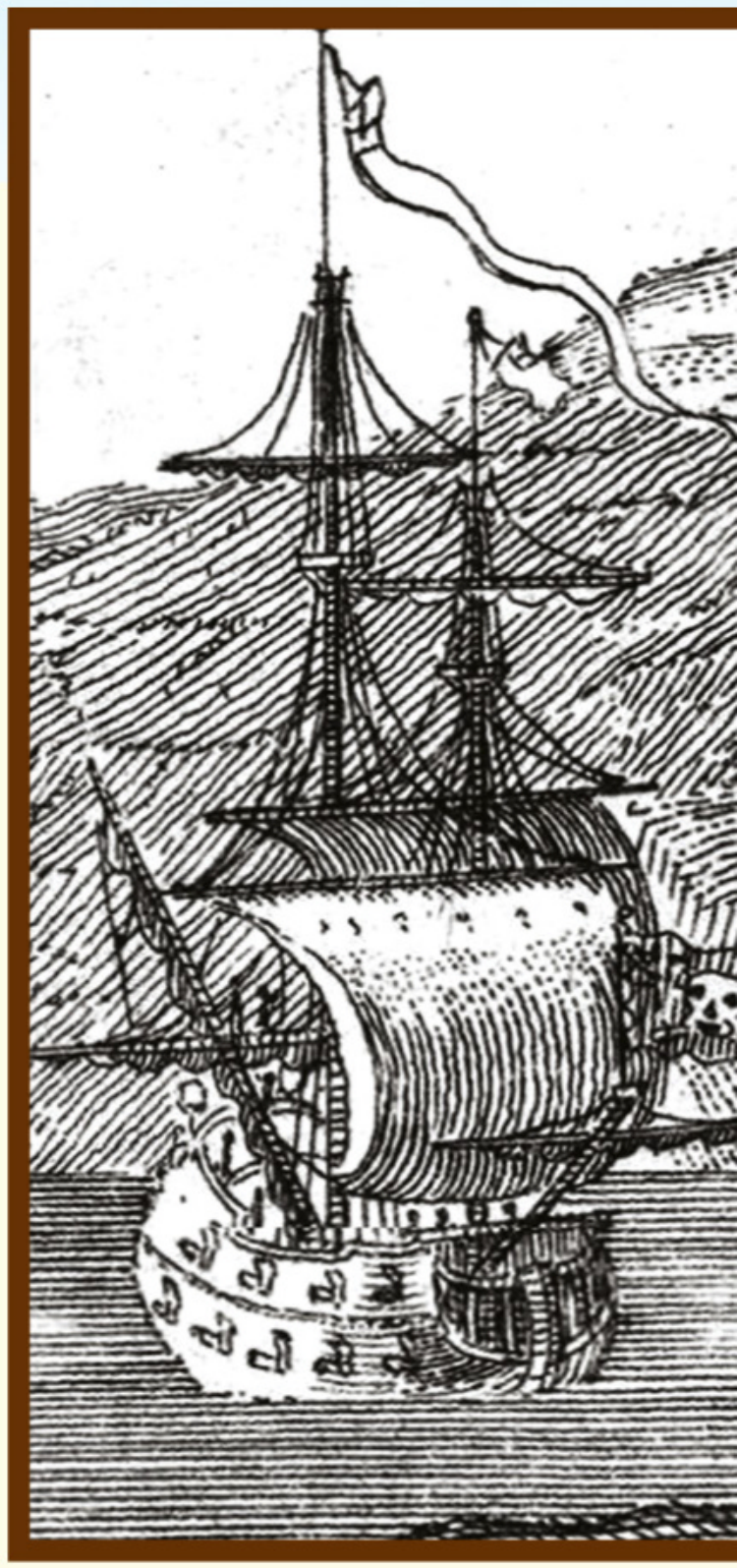
was merely a collection of neglected and abandoned buildings, and a burned-out church partially covered by the encroaching vegetation. Still, it gave Hornigold what he needed: a relatively safe haven far from the punitive British authorities. At first he used three large seagoing canoes called piraguas to prey on Spanish shipping passing through the Straits of Florida, which allowed him to evade any pursuit in the shallow waters of the Bahamian archipelago. Their plunder, ranging from rum and sugar to slaves, was then sold in the otherwise law-abiding settlement on Harbour Island off Eleuthera.

Meanwhile, back in Jamaica the former privateers were growing restless. While many had signed on as crew in merchant ships, others waited, hoping for a new war to break out, bringing with it the chance to resume privateering. A few like Hornigold had turned to piracy. Then, in July 1715, a glittering new opportunity presented itself.

When reports reached Jamaica that a Spanish treasure fleet had been wrecked on the eastern coast of Florida, Lord Hamilton sent Jennings and his armed sloop Bersheba to investigate, accompanied by another pirate hunter, Captain John, in the sloop Eagle. On Christmas Day 1715 they fell in with a small Spanish mail boat off the upper Florida Keys. Jennings learned the location of the shipwrecks from the mail boat's captain and that the Spanish

BENJAMIN HORNIGOLD 1680 – 1719

An English privateer at first, like many he turned to piracy after the War of the Spanish Succession ended. He was one of the most successful captains of the time, leading the establishment of the pirate haven at Nassau, and was a mentor to Edward 'Blackbeard' Teach. He accepted a royal pardon in 1718 and became a pirate hunter until his death in 1719.



RIGHT The Queen Anne's Revenge was Blackbeard's flagship

BELOW The exploits of the pirates around Nassau have become the stuff of legend

© Getty Images

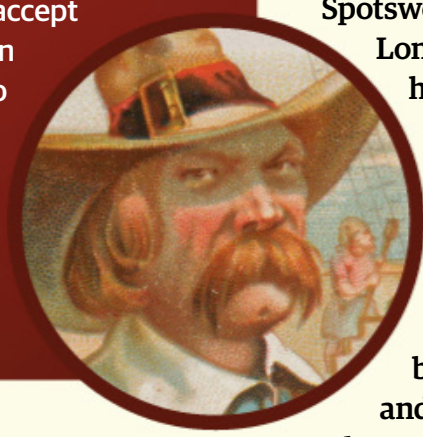
had established salvage camps close to them. It seemed much of the precious cargo had already been recovered and shipped back to Havana in Cuba, but there was still a lot in the camps. Jennings decided to exceed his orders and steal the treasure.

In a surprise night attack Jennings and his 150 men drove off the camps' guards and returned to their ships with their loot, valued at 60,000 pieces-of-eight. Back in Port Royal, Lord Hamilton initially turned a blind eye to Jennings' raid. However, the Spanish lodged a formal diplomatic complaint and Lord Hamilton was ordered to forbid further attacks. Jennings, though, ignored this and returned to Florida to sack the camps again, this time stealing 120,000 pieces-of-eight. But there would be no hero's welcome in Jamaica because he and his men had broken the law, so he made for New Providence in the Bahamas.

Jennings had briefly put in to Nassau the previous December and knew the island was now a pirate haven. Still, despite his pirate-hunting remit he had ignored Hornigold's activities. Now, in early 1716, he put in there again, his holds filled with plunder. By then Nassau was a very different place to the one Hornigold had first landed at three years before. A number of unscrupulous Jamaican merchants had moved there to trade with the pirates and now, thanks to the Spanish treasure, Nassau became a thriving den for pirates, treasure hunters, smugglers and illicit traders. By June 1716 Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia was writing to London complaining that pirates had taken over the Bahamas, his correspondence proof that Nassau had evolved into a true pirate haven.

CHARLES VANE c.1680 – 1721

Vane learned his trade under Jennings and was part of the crew that stole the Spanish treasure in 1715. He got his own ship to captain by 1717 and, unlike many of the other senior pirates in Nassau, he did not accept the offer of a pardon in 1718. He was known to be a particularly cruel leader, showing little respect for his men or those he fought. He was captured and hanged in 1720.



THE HEYDAY

There appears to have been bad blood between Hornigold and Jennings, and this led to the creation of two groups within the pirate community. The followers of Jennings included Charles Vane, a man who would later make a name for himself as one of the die-hard pirates who refused to accept a royal pardon. Those who sailed with Hornigold included Sam Bellamy and Paulsgrave Williams, and the French pirate Olivier Levasseur (nicknamed La Busse, or 'Buzzard'). During 1716 these groups sometimes cooperated with each other, and sometimes preyed on each other. This duplicity was seen when Jennings captured the French armed merchantman St Marie off Cuba in April 1716. He took her with the help of Bellamy and Williams, but a few days later the two pirates absconded with much of Jennings' plunder and rejoined their mentor Hornigold.

Much of what we know of piratical activity during this period comes

"LIKE THE NOW-PARDONED JENNINGS BEFORE HIM, HORNIGOLD WOULD SERVE AS A PIRATE HUNTER"

ABOVE Treasure from the 1715 fleet – a mixture of Spanish gold doubloons and silver pieces-of-eight found near Fort Pierce, Florida

BELOW Bahamas governor Woodes Rogers (seated right) with his family

4x © Alamy

from depositions written by merchant captains whose vessels had been attacked. Essentially, these were akin to crime reports presented to the authorities. One, penned in Jamaica in mid-December 1716, provided the first mention a new pirate captain. It claimed that a week before, Captain Henry Timberlake of the brigantine Lamb had been plundered by pirates in the Windward Passage, between Cuba and Hispaniola (now Haiti). His assailant was Hornigold, commanding the sloop Delight. Then, an hour later, another pirate sloop appeared. The Lamb was boarded again, and this time the pirates took the ship's provisions. Their captain, according to Timberlake, was Edward Thach. The spelling of the pirate varied slightly – Thach, Thatch and Teach being the most common. History though, would know him as Blackbeard.

This meant that by late 1716 Edward Teach, or Blackbeard, was operating alongside Hornigold. Then in the early summer of 1717 a British privateer was wrecked on Cat Island, 190km to the south-east of New Providence. After her commander, Captain Mathew Musson, made it back to Jamaica that July he wrote a letter to the British Council of Trade and Plantations. He reported that, according to the island's inhabitants, "five pirates made the harbour of New Providence their rendezvous". He listed them as Hornigold, Jennings, Burgiss, White and Thatch, the latter commanding a six-gun sloop crewed by 60 men.

THE DECLINE

By then though, Blackbeard had flown the coop. In May 1717 he and Hornigold went on a cruise together, ranging as far afield as the Carolinas before returning to Nassau in August. After that, the two men went their separate ways and Blackbeard would begin a pirate cruise that lasted until November 1718, when he was killed off Ocracoke Island in Carolina's Outer Banks. Other pirates based on Nassau moved on too. In early 1717 La Busse left the Bahamas in his sloop Postillion to hunt off the Brazilian coast, while Bellamy in the Sultana and Williams in the sloop Marianne sailed off on their own joint cruise.

It was Bellamy who had the greatest success, capturing the large slave ship Whydah Galley in the Windward Passage. He and Williams then cruised up America's Atlantic seaboard. This venture ended abruptly in mid-April when the Whydah was caught in a hurricane off Cape Cod. She was wrecked and Bellamy and almost all his crew were lost. The

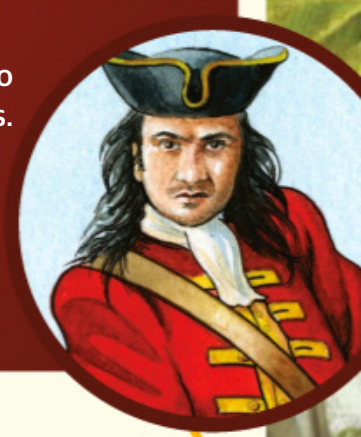
STEDE BONNET 1688 – 1718

While some pirates became plantation owners after their careers on the high seas, Bonnet started that way and was known as the 'Gentleman Pirate'. He was wealthy enough to buy his own ship and hire a crew of 70. He fell in with Blackbeard and gave up control of his ship to the more experienced seaman. Bonnet took the pardon in 1718 but went back to piracy soon after.

5x © Alamy

'CALICO' JACK RACKHAM
1682 – 1720

Calico Jack was not the most successful or swashbuckling pirate, but he's famous thanks to a few unusual events in his life on the high seas. He overthrew Charles Vane's command of The Ranger and also had both Mary Read and Anne Bonny on his crew, entering into a romantic relationship with the later. He was captured by an English privateer in 1720 and hanged.



ABOVE Calico Jack's association with Anne Bonny and Mary Read made him famous through history, despite not being a particularly successful pirate

LEFT After years of violent plunder, by 1720 the pirate scourge had largely been dealt with

FAR-LEFT Pirates who refused or broke their pardons like Stede Bonnet were hunted down and executed

band of pirates based in Nassau was dwindling. The year before, Hornigold had been deposed by his crew when he steadfastly refused to attack British ships. While this undermined his authority with his men it also helped establish him as a moderate, and this was about to stand him in very good stead.

By the summer of 1717 the British authorities had been pondering how best to react to the pirate scourge. The coming of peace four years before had led to a scaling down of the Royal Navy and it lacked the resources it needed to hunt down the pirates, so the Council of Trade and Plantations came up with a pragmatic solution. A pardon would be offered to any pirate willing to accept it, on the grounds that they ceased any attacks by January 1718. On 5 September 1717 the Proclamation for Suppressing of Pirates was signed by King George I and passed into law. Word of the pardon reached Nassau that December, and Hornigold decided to accept it. The pirate community was split, though, and while Hornigold and Jennings both campaigned for acceptance, others adamantly refused to countenance any surrender.

Matters came to a head in February when the frigate HMS Phoenix arrived off Nassau. Her commander, Captain Pearce, brought provisional pardons and with Hornigold's help he gathered 209 signatures. Before Pearce left, he intimated that a British governor, Woodes Rogers, would arrive that summer to confirm the surrender and to formally reclaim the Bahamas in the name of the crown. This led to an irrevocable split among the Nassau pirates as the die-hards led by Vane refused to accept British rule. Inevitably the situation reached a climax when Rogers finally appeared in late July 1718. Vane spectacularly rushed past the governor's squadron using a fireship to force a passage through the British ships, but this would turn out to be the last real hurrah of pirate Nassau.

Vane's dramatic escape was calculated to humiliate Rogers, but in fact it solved a problem by removing those who opposed British rule. Rogers took command of the colony, occupied its fort and raised the British flag. With the help of Hornigold he finally brought an end to the once-feared pirate community of Nassau. Like the now-pardoned Jennings before him, Hornigold would serve as a pirate hunter, until he was lost in a hurricane late the following year.

Offering pardons to the pirates had been a real success – the 'carrot' in Britain's anti-piracy initiative. The 'stick' was that those pirates who remained at large would now be hunted down and made examples of. The Royal Navy could now concentrate on the search for them and by the early 1720s the pirate scourge had largely been dealt with. When some of the pirates on Nassau returned to their old ways, Rogers and others brought them to justice. After a series of high-profile trials and executions, the message was clear: piracy didn't pay. The death of Blackbeard in November 1718 and the subsequent trial and execution ▶

ANNE BONNY
1697 – 1721

One of the few recorded women who sailed as a pirate in this era, Bonny had a fiery temper that matched her red hair. She married a sailor in her teens and moved to Nassau around 1718. Here she met 'Calico' Jack Rackham and joined his crew, while her husband became an informant for the new governor of the Bahamas. Bonny became pregnant, but it's unknown what happened to the child. She was tried alongside Rackham but her fate remains unknown.

MARY READ
1685 – 1721

Read was raised as a boy by her mother, seemingly pretending to be her deceased older half-brother Mark as a means to keep money coming from his grandmother. She continued to dress as a man when she joined the army. She married a Flemish soldier around 1700 but he died not long after. Read took a ship to the Caribbean and joined a pirate crew, teaming up with Calico Jack, but was later caught and executed.

of his crew in Williamsburg in the Virginia colony was just one example of this new draconian approach to piracy. For a few brief years piracy had flourished in Nassau, and a nascent pirate community had been established, but the speed with which this settlement collapsed proved just how unstable it had always been.

THE PIRATE COMMUNITY

In later years the establishment of this pirate community at Nassau came to be seen as something much grander than it was. A number of historians argued that it was a social experiment, a brief egalitarian flourishing of democracy in a world dominated by the restrictive mores of civilisation and society. Much has been made of pirates rejecting these values and the paternal authority of nations. There is certainly something to this: the low-key radicalism of these pirates was noted by those who came into contact with them or was recorded in their last words before being executed. Nassau, though, was never established as anything other than a temporary haven for those living outside the law. Claims of Nassau being a 'Pirate Republic' are misleading because it suggests a degree of unity and self-determination that simply didn't exist.

In his book *The Republic of Pirates* (2007), author Colin Woodard proposes that this 'republic' was a semi-organised confederacy of pirates who worked together to build a community. He argues that the governance of Nassau was dominated by a pirate code, and that the democratic structure that existed within the pirate community ensured that the 'republic' would be run on fair and just lines. However, this theory takes the known egalitarianism that existed among pirate crews and projects it onto a much bigger canvas: the governance not of a ship but of a whole pirate community. Certainly there are examples where the pirates worked together for the good of their community – the re-arming of Nassau's fort in late 1716 using guns taken from captured ships is a case in point. However, this falls short of proving that a 'Pirate Republic' existed - a structure that was never mentioned by contemporaries such as Rogers.

> "BY ALL ACCOUNTS PIRATE NASSAU WAS AN ANARCHIC PLACE, WITH ITS OWN WAY OF DOING THINGS"

In fact, the nature of the pirate community of Nassau was much simpler and it is clear that it never operated as a single political entity. Instead, factions existed between the followers of Jennings and Hornigold, and later those of Hornigold and Vane. Nassau itself was divided between the pirates and those who supported them; the illegal merchants

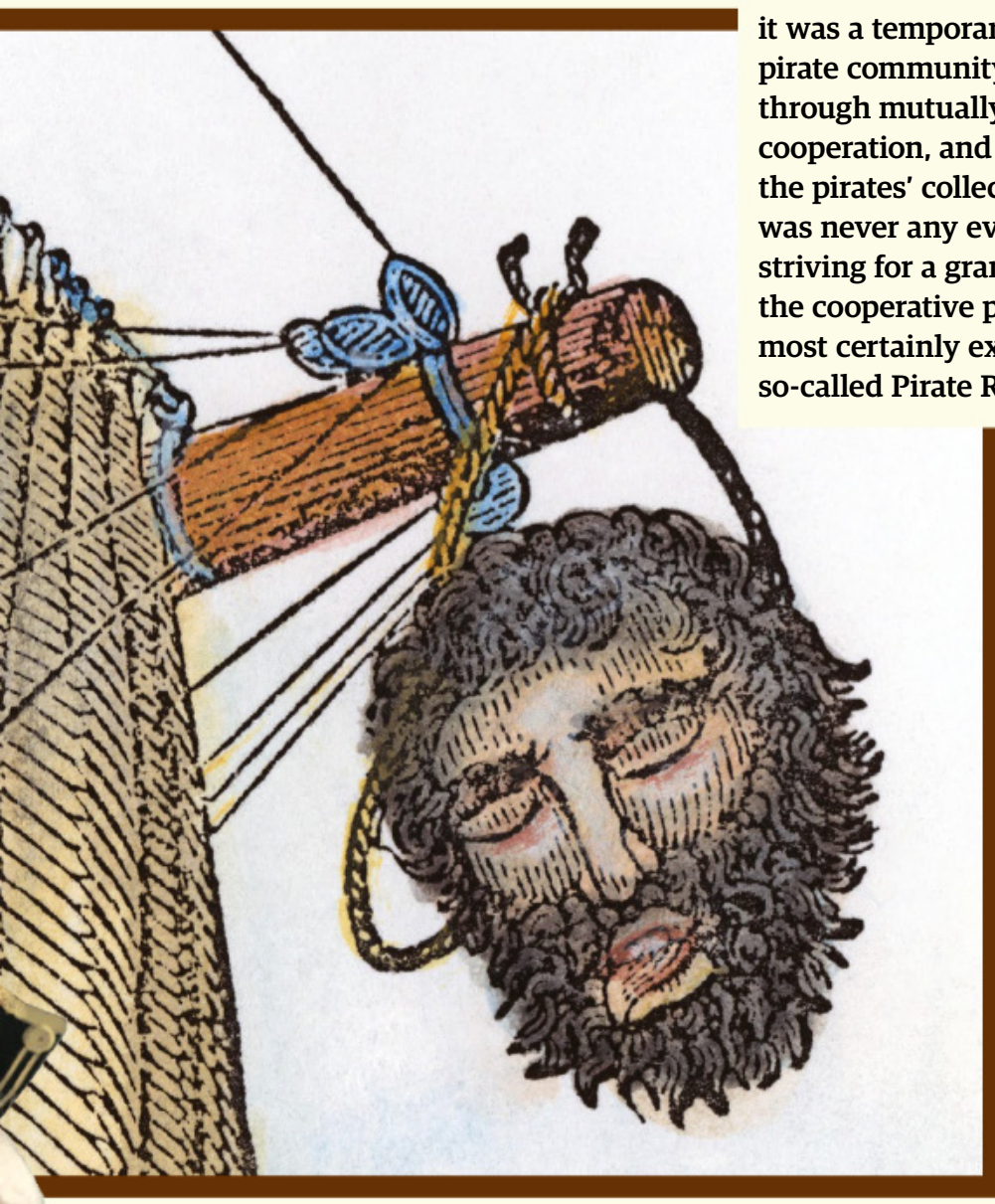
EDWARD 'BLACKBEARD' TEACH
c.1680 – 1718

Possibly the best-known pirate of this age, Blackbeard received his first command in 1716, from Hornigold. He quickly earned a fearsome reputation with his daring raids against vessels that crossed his path, building up his own fleet with captured ships. He accepted a pardon but soon went back to piracy and was eventually hunted down by Lieutenant Robert Maynard and killed in 1718.

and smugglers, prostitutes and innkeepers. Then there were the Bahamian colonists themselves, who still strived to make a living from the land despite the influx of these volatile newcomers. This was no 'republic', either formal or informal.

A more accurate model is the one proposed by Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), the anarchist philosopher and scientist. His ground-breaking anthropological study *Mutual Aid* (1902) explored the idea of mutually beneficial cooperation within both the animal kingdom and human communities. By all accounts pirate Nassau was an anarchic place, with its own way of doing things. This, though, doesn't mean it lacked any communal structure. Instead, acts such as re-arming the fort, establishing links with merchants and overcoming internal factional divisions are all examples of mutual aid in tune with the Kropotkin model. When this spirit of reciprocity ended amid the division created by the offer of a pardon, the pirate community fell apart.

Nassau then, was never a 'Pirate Republic'. To claim as much gives the place a degree of structural aspiration that was never reflected in the historical records. Instead, it was a temporary and transient pirate community that developed through mutually beneficial cooperation, and one which served the pirates' collective need. There was never any evidence of any striving for a grander motive. Nassau the cooperative pirate community most certainly existed – Nassau the so-called Pirate Republic never did.



ABOVE-LEFT Blackbeard couldn't walk away from the pirate life and was hunted down by British authorities and privateers

LEFT Blackbeard was beheaded and his head displayed on the front of Lieutenant Robert Maynard's sloop

4x © Alamy

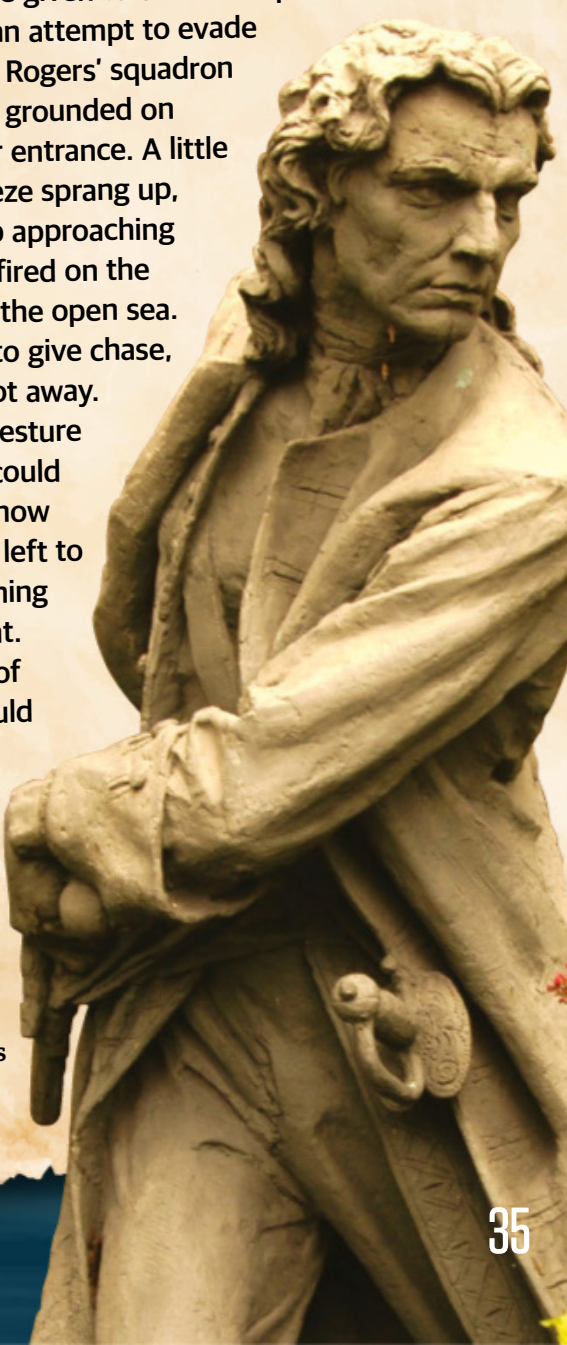
PIRATES' LAST STAND

The dramatic end to the haven in the Bahamas

In the late afternoon of 24 July 1718, Governor Woodes Rogers appeared off Nassau Harbour with a small squadron: his own ship Delicia, a storeship, two naval frigates and two smaller sloops. He dropped anchor, as it was too late in the day to claim possession of the settlement. That evening all ashore seemed calm, and the sailors settled down for what they assumed would be a peaceful night. In fact, Charles Vane, the leader of Nassau's die-hard pirates, had no intention of meekly submitting to the British crown. Shortly after 2am lookouts spotted sails being hoisted on a large ship in the harbour. Then, flames were seen on her decks. She was a fireship, and Vane had set her on a collision course with the British squadron.

In a frenzy, orders were given to cut the ships' anchor cables and hoist sails in an attempt to evade the approaching inferno. Rogers' squadron scattered, and two ships grounded on sandbars off the harbour entrance. A little later, as an offshore breeze sprang up, Rogers saw a small sloop approaching them. As it passed by it fired on the Delicia, then headed for the open sea. Rogers ordered a sloop to give chase, but Vane and his men got away. It was as spectacular a gesture as any of the die-hards could have wished for. Still, it now meant that nobody was left to prevent Rogers establishing control of the settlement.

This marked the end of pirate Nassau. Vane would remain at large for less than a year and after his capture he was tried and hanged in Port Royal as an example to other would-be pirates.



RIGHT A statue of Woodes Rogers stands outside the British Colonial Hilton hotel in Nassau

Nero

MISCREANT OR MISUNDERSTOOD?

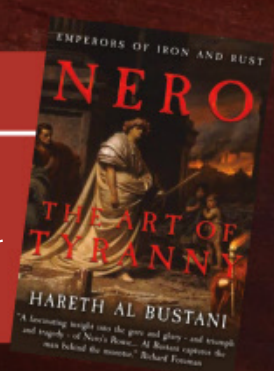
Written by Hareth Al Bustani

Famed for his bloody rise to power, slide into tyranny and catastrophic collapse, we examine the legacy of Rome's notorious Emperor Nero

EXPERT BIO

HARETH AL BUSTANI

Hareth Al Bustani is a journalist, historian and author of the Amazon bestseller *Nero: The Art of Tyranny*.



For many, the Roman Emperor Nero is the quintessential mad tyrant: a talentless musician who played the fiddle while Rome burned, killed his mother and two wives, and defiled a Vestal Virgin. But the real Nero was far more interesting than that.

He was born in 37 CE, the son of a psychopathic general Gnaeus and Agrippina the Younger, whose mother was a granddaughter of Augustus and father was the legendary general Germanicus, descended from Augustus' sister and Mark Anthony. Despite the baby's pedigree, Nero's father scowled: "Nothing born of myself and Agrippina can be other than odious and a public disaster," and his uncle Caligula joked that he should be named after Claudius - the butt of every family joke.

© Getty Images

© Alamy

© Getty Images

Keen to discover what the gods had in store for her young boy, Agrippina consulted an astrologer, who predicted that he would one day rule, but only after killing his own mother. She supposedly spat back: "Let him kill me, only let him rule!"

Agrippina's upbringing was marked by turmoil. Under the reign of Tiberius, her father, who was set to inherit the empire, was assassinated and her mother and two brothers died in captivity. Soon after the birth of Nero she fell out of favour yet again when her brother, the new Emperor Caligula, went mad and had her banished. Gnaeus fled with the young Nero but died soon after of oedema, his body swelling up with fluid. Fortunately for Agrippina, on 24 January 41 CE the tide turned once again when Caligula was assassinated and replaced with uncle Claudius, who recalled her from exile and restored her son's rightful inheritance.

Soon after the emperor's wife, Nero's cousin Messalina, gave birth to a son, who was named Britannicus after Claudius' successful invasion of Britain. As the mother of the emperor's only biological heir, Messalina saw the husbandless Agrippina as a serious threat to her own standing. Yet while she managed to have Agrippina's sister Livilla exiled for supposedly committing adultery with the philosopher-senator Seneca, Agrippina charmed Claudius into sparing Seneca the death penalty, making him a lifelong ally.

Keen to hit back, Agrippina launched a spectacular propaganda campaign centred around a salacious story that alleged Messalina had sent a group of assassins to kill the baby Nero – only to be foiled when a serpent coiled itself around the baby's crib. Agrippina followed up the yarn by placing a snakeskin inside a gold bracelet and having Nero wear it at all times.

When Claudius held a special edition of the Secular Games, commemorating Rome's 800th anniversary, Messalina's worst fears were confirmed. During the ceremony, the nine-year-old Nero was paraded in public for the first time, riding on horseback alongside Britannicus, three years his junior. To Messalina's horror, Agrippina's son received a more impassioned ovation than her own, which sent her paranoia through the roof.

Backed by the emperor's three most powerful freedmen, former slaves who ran the state's corrupt bureaucracy, Messalina convinced her husband to have Agrippina's sister starved to death. However, according to Roman historians (whose accounts of powerful female figures admittedly tend to be mired in misogynistic flights of fancy) Messalina's lust for power spiralled into a series of increasingly dangerous sexual liaisons that saw her sleep with, manipulate and kill several high-profile figures.

As the bodies piled up, Agrippina shored up her position by seducing and marrying her sister-in-law's rich husband Sallustius Passienus Crispus. He died soon after, having conveniently named Agrippina and Nero heirs to his 200 million sesterces fortune. When Messalina was later killed for engaging in a treasonous, and adulterous, plot against Claudius, Agrippina swooped in: she not only earned the emperor's hand in marriage but also had him name Nero as his heir – over his own biological son Britannicus.

"THE EMPEROR WAS A MAN WHO APPEALED TO ALL CLASSES ALIKE – HANDING 400 SESTERCES TO EVERY CITIZEN AND GREETING SOLDIERS BY NAME"

Messiah or Antichrist?

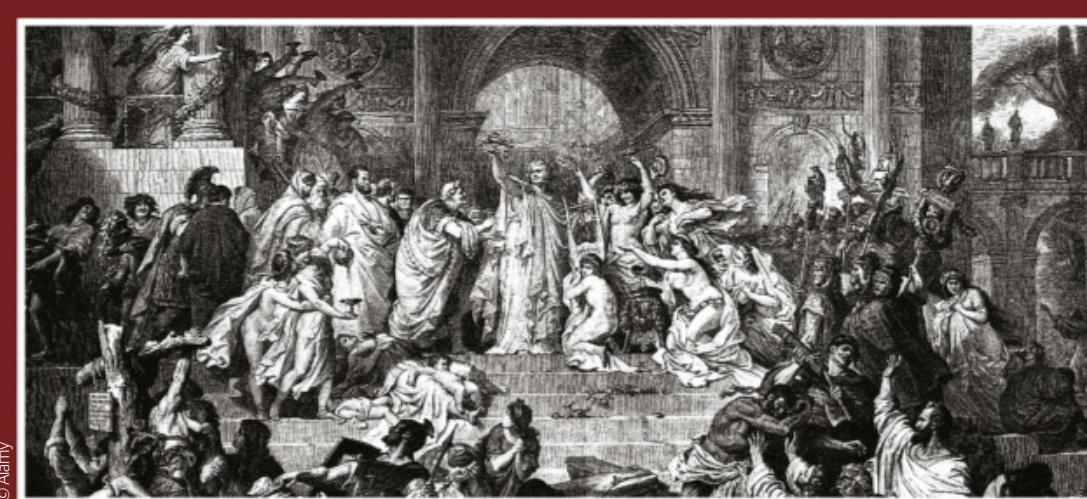
Nero's sudden death triggered rumours that he would one day return, either as a saviour or harbinger of doom

Although Nero's later years were marked by a steep slide into hedonism, frivolity and tyranny, with the only accounts of his life written by those who loathed him it is hard to gauge how fairly his wider reign has been assessed. While the upper-class chroniclers Seutonius and Cassius Dio were happy to fill their accounts the most wildly unsubstantiated rumours and conjecture, even the more diligent Tacitus made no effort to hide his disdain for the singing emperor.

In truth, Nero was beloved by the masses. They continued to model their private portraits on his for years and kept coins bearing his image in their personal mirror boxes. They also dressed his tomb with flowers and erected statues of him clad in magistrates' togas, accompanied by edicts as if written by his own hand. At the end of the century, Dio Chrysostom wrote that "everybody" still wished that Nero would remain "emperor for all time."

However, the *Sibylline Oracles*, a series of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic verses, painted a very different picture of the emperor. The oracles' Jewish compiler predicted the return of "the matricidal fugitive" who had fled across the Euphrates to Parthia. After years of bloody civil war, "acting the athlete" and "driving chariots", this figure would deliver retribution on behalf of the East and the oppressed.

The fifth oracle, written a century or so later, refers again to a "godlike man from Italy" who "playing at theatricals with honey-sweet songs rendered with melodious voice... will destroy many men, and his wretched mother. He will flee from Babylon, a terrible and shameless prince whom all mortals and noble men despise. For he destroyed many men." Even in the 5th century, Augustine of Hippo asserted that many people still believed Nero would one day return, either as a saviour or the Antichrist.


© Alamy

TOP-LEFT In 59 CE Nero tried to kill his mother Agrippina using a sabotaged boat; when that failed he sent a team of hitmen to finish the job

ABOVE-LEFT Nero immediately regretted killing his mother, an act that haunted him for the rest of his life

Paving his way to greatness, the 13-year-old Nero enjoyed the toga virilis of manhood ceremony a year early, marking his entry into public life. With bronze hair, deep-set eyes and a slight chin, the handsome adolescent was a refreshing change from the moody, unsightly emperor. Coins were even minted, depicting Nero clad in a military cloak, and donated to the soldiers in his name. Furthermore, he was named Prince of the Youth and nominated by the Senate consul – even though he would not serve for another six years.

Cementing his place in the royal family, Agrippina had Nero married to Claudius' popular daughter Octavia. Agrippina also placed him under the tutelage of the brilliant Seneca and the leader of the Praetorian Guard Sextus Afranius Burrus – both of whom owed her their positions.

Conveniently, with all of Messalina's allies weeded out from positions of power, and Nero set to inherit the empire, Claudius dropped dead in 54 CE – allegedly killed by Agrippina, via a poisoned enema. With that, the 16-year-old Nero was emperor. Seneca wrote a remarkable accession speech, where Nero promised to uproot the corruption that had plagued Claudius' court and return powers to the Senate. And while others had promised this before, incredibly, Nero actually kept his word, reversing egregious laws and restoring authority to the Senate.

Echoing the spirit of the times, the poet Calpurnius Sicilus roared: "No longer will the wretched Senate chamber be empty and the prison full." The emperor was a man who appealed to all classes alike. He handed 400 sesterces to every citizen, gave the Praetorians free grain, greeted soldiers by name, introduced a salary for impoverished senators, built a beautiful new market, scored military victories abroad, held the most spectacular games Rome had ever seen, and tackled predatory tax farming practices.

However, his mother soon began to resent her dwindling influence. When a group of Armenian diplomats came to visit, instead of sitting at her own dais, she attempted to assert herself by strolling over and sitting next to Nero – as if she were his equal. Desperate to prevent this humiliation without embarrassing Agrippina, Seneca ran over and met her half-way, physically blocking her from joining her son.

Things escalated when Nero began cheating on his wife with a former slave named Acte. Having worked so hard to legitimise Nero's claim to power, this was something Agrippina could not bear. During one screaming match, she even threatened to support his step-brother Britannicus' claim over his. Not long after, when Britannicus dropped dead at dinner, Nero coldly remarked it must have been an epileptic fit. Agrippina, however, knew a poisoning when she saw one.

The feud finally reached a crescendo when Nero began a riskier affair with a more prominent noblewoman, Poppaea Sabina. Having lost control, Agrippina is even said to have tried to seduce her son out of desperation – with her inappropriate behaviour convincing Nero that she was too dangerous to let live. When his plan to drown her in a booby-trapped boat failed, he simply dispatched a group of assassins to bludgeon and butcher her to death; justifying it by claiming she had sent someone to murder him. The prophecy was fulfilled.

With his mother out of the way, Nero began to take less heed of his advisors, marking a new chapter of his rule. The emperor had always dreamed of racing chariots and singing in public – but

ABOVE Keen to take the pressure off himself after the Fire of Rome, Nero blamed the Christians and executed scores with horrific barbarity

BELOW Although Nero loved his spectacles, contrary to his reputation he initially stamped out some of the more excessive violence his ancestors were known for

Seneca and Burrus had kept his worst excesses under control by having him practise in private. Now, rebranding himself as Apollo – the sun god of chariots and song – Nero began paving the way towards his public debut.

In 59 CE, the emperor spent a fortune encouraging nobles to take part in gladiatorial battles and theatrical performances, much to the disgust of the more conservative aristocrats. That same year, at the inaugural Juvenile Games, celebrating his first shave, Nero himself took to the stage, playing the lyre and singing before a shocked audience of elites and soldiers. Afterwards, the theatre filled with the most spectacular applause as the emperor unveiled the Augustiani, an entourage of young Roman knights who spent all day celebrating his majesty. Poor Burrus was compelled to lead the Praetorians in applause, with tears of shame in his eyes. Although the event was technically a private affair, it was a major milestone.

Later, Nero introduced the Neronia festival, bringing the ancient Greek games to Rome. While many nobles thought Greek athletics, with their vulgar naked wrestling, were an affront to Roman virtue, the lowly plebians who comprised the vast majority of the population gleefully lapped up each of Nero's increasingly ambitious spectacles. Most would never have a chance to visit Greece. Finally, in 64 CE during a trip to the Hellenic retreat of Naples, the emperor officially sang on stage for the first time in public. During the performance, the city was rocked by an earthquake that tore the theatre to the ground. While some called it an ill-omen, Nero boasted that the fact no one was hurt was a miracle signifying divine approval.

By now, with Burrus dead, Seneca found himself drifting into the political wilderness and even asked to withdraw to private life. Though Nero refused, he placed his trust entirely in one of the two new Praetorian Prefects, an opportunist rogue named Ofonius Tigellinus. A fellow hedonist, this was a man he understood. The emperor began to treat the whole capital as his palace, holding great city-wide parties, including one where he supposedly became the wife of a freedman named Pythagoras and consummated the bond in full view of the public. Meanwhile, determined to rid himself of his legal wife, the beloved Octavia, Nero had her banished and murdered – sparking riots that were only contained with brute force.

Soon after, a fire broke out across the capital's densely packed wooden shops, sparking an almighty inferno that raged for six

3x © Alamy

ABOVE Though Nero ruled during the Great Fire of Rome, claims that he set the fire himself or played the fiddle as the city burned are far-fetched

LEFT In 66 CE Nero embarked on a year-long tour of Greece, winning 1,800 prizes and awarding the Greeks their freedom

The Pseudo-Neros

As rumours abounded that he faked his own death, three men claiming to be Nero tried to seize power

A year after Nero's demise, with many refusing to believe he was really dead, a man described as either a slave from Pontus or an Italian freedman, who looked exactly like Nero, sparked off a sensation in the provinces of Achaia and Asia. With Nero's whirlwind tour of Greece fresh in their minds, many were thrilled at the prospect of the emperor's return. A virtuoso singer and citharode, the pretender, who openly claimed to be Nero, began seducing army deserters to his cause with promises of riches.

Sailing to the Cycladic island of Cythnus, he convinced scores of Roman soldiers to declare for him, while executing those who refused. When the rebels turned to piracy, pillaging merchants and arming slaves, one of the centurions in their midst broke free and spread the news of Nero's re-emergence.

Desperate to nip this threat in the bud, the governor Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas was sent to quash the rebellion. There, while 'Nero' tried to convince Asprenas' men to join him, Asprenas snuck a group of soldiers onto his ship and killed him, parading his corpse back to Rome.

A decade later, during the reign of Titus, another lyre-playing 'Nero' emerged in Asia, claiming to have escaped his captors in 68 CE. Joined by a handful of Asian followers, the imposter travelled towards the Euphrates, gathering supporters and seeking refuge with the Persian usurper Artabanus. Artabanus was plotting an attack on Rome and thought having 'Nero' on his side would soften his opposition. However, when he learned the man was a fraud he had him killed.

Roughly 20 years after Nero's death, as Domitian struggled to hold the empire together, a third man of unknown origin emerged in Parthia, where he was treated as if he were Nero himself. He was so revered by the Parthians they refused to surrender him to the desperate Romans, even at the risk of war.

"WHILE MANY NOBLES THOUGHT GREEK ATHLETICS WERE AN AFFRONT TO ROMAN VIRTUE, THE PLEBIANS GLEEFULLY LAPPED UP EACH OF NERO'S INCREASINGLY AMBITIOUS SPECTACLES"

days, leaving only four of Rome's 14 districts standing. Nero responded swiftly, opening up his gardens to the homeless, hauling in huge quantities of food and launching a massive reconstruction drive. However, the city was in shock. When Nero unveiled plans for a huge new palace, the Golden House (complete with a revolving dining room and perfume dispensers) which would gobble up huge parts of the city, some began to speculate he had started the fire himself to make way for the vanity project.

Desperate to give the people a scapegoat, Nero launched a violent persecution against a small sect of Messianic Jews, who followed a figure known as Christ. Across the capital Christians, including the apostles Peter and Paul, were rounded up and executed in agonising theatrical manners: dressed in animal skins and torn apart by dogs, crucified upside down, and even set ablaze and used to light Nero's garden parties as he strolled about dressed as a charioteer.

Aside from angering conservatives with his artistic pursuits, Nero had also begun to go back on his initial vows, treating the senate with increasing disdain and even lifting a freeze on closed-door treason trials. As Rome reeled from the fire, a group of patricians were caught plotting to assassinate Nero and replace him with the statesman Gaius Piso. Indicating the mood, when interrogated, the tribune Subrius Flavus explained: "I began to hate you when you turned into the murderer of your mother and wife – a chariot-driver, an actor, a fire-raiser." Growing increasingly paranoid, Nero tasked Tigellinus with uprooting the plotters; which he took as a license to wipe out his enemies, with even poor Seneca driven to commit suicide.

After the next Neronian games, where Nero performed his music yet again, his wife Poppaea and their unborn child died unexpectedly – triggering a dramatic mental breakdown. Grieving and distraught, he became more paranoid and frivolous than ever, leaving the capital in the hands of the freedman Helius in 67 CE so he could go on a tour of the great Greek games.

Over the next year, Nero travelled across Greece, winning all four major games and amassing 1,800 prizes. During one particularly dangerous 10-horse chariot race, he was thrown from his chariot, almost fatally, only to climb back on and finish. Still haunted by his mother's ghost, he also acted out tragedies such as the *Blinding of Oedipus* and *Orestes the Matricide*, publicly working through his emotional turmoil as his self-identity became intertwined with myth.

Amid these distractions, Nero repeatedly ignored letters warning him of emerging rebellions back home. Having taken Tigellinus with him, he was even losing control of the Praetorians. It was only when Helius showed up in person that Nero decided to return, taking his sweet time to indulge in Rome's only ever artistic triumph. When he finally arrived back in Rome, he rarely spoke to anyone directly lest he damage his singing voice; and when he did eventually summon the senate, rather than discussing the rebellion raging in Gaul he gave them a lecture on musical instruments.

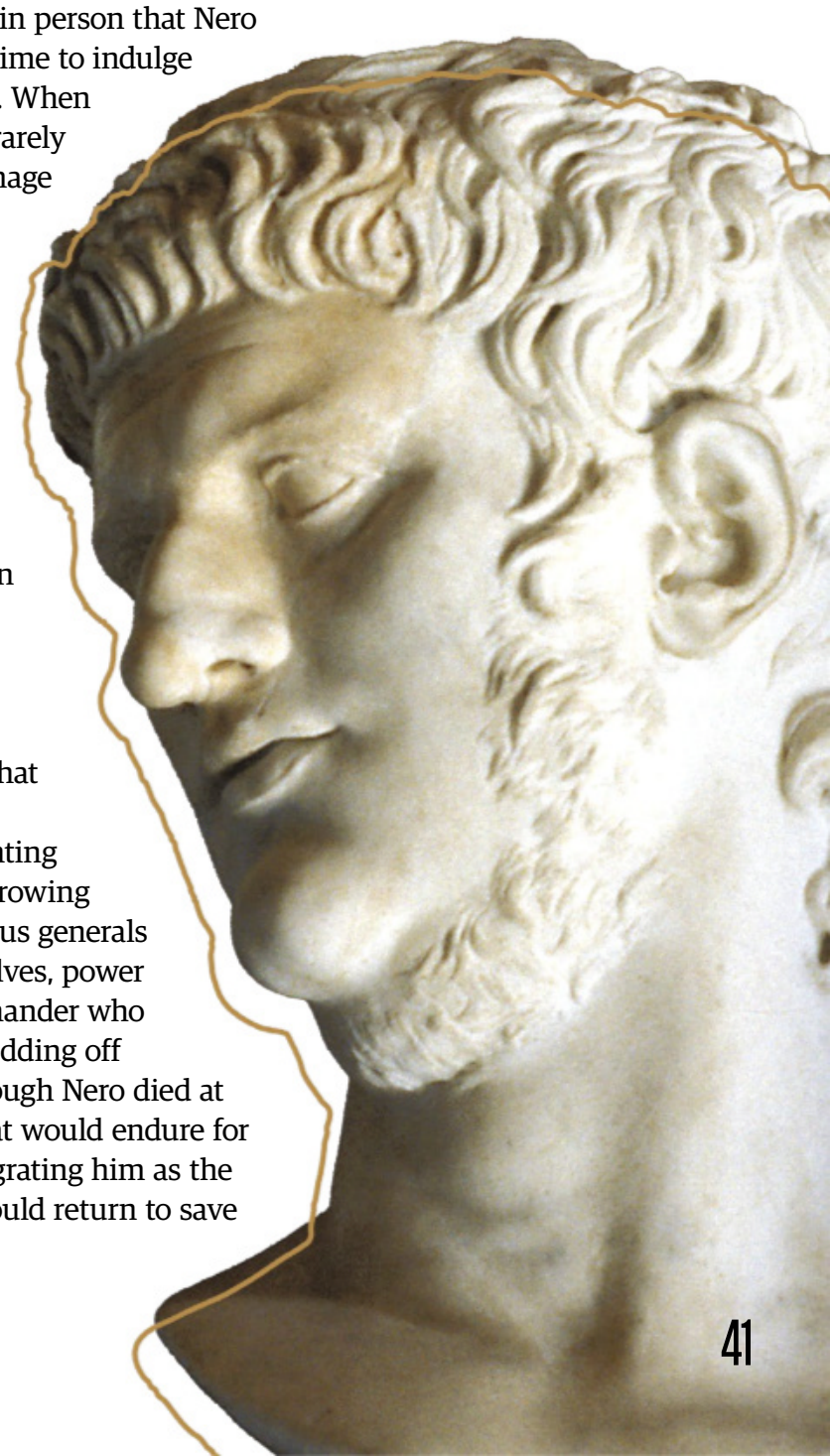
When the Spanish governor Servius Galba rose up in revolt, Nero's allies rapidly deserted him. He woke up one night to find his palace completely deserted, and even his poison box stolen. Desperate, he fled with a group of his beloved freedmen to one of their derelict properties, where he dramatically committed suicide, proclaiming: "What an artist the world is losing!"

By the time of Nero's death, infighting had wiped out Augustus' lineage, throwing the empire into chaos. With numerous generals desperate to seize power for themselves, power eventually fell to Vespasian, a commander who had once earned Nero's wrath for nodding off during one of his performances. Though Nero died at just 30-years-old, he left a legacy that would endure for thousands of years, with some denigrating him as the Antichrist and others wishing he would return to save Rome from ruin.

ABOVE After being betrayed by his allies, Nero committed suicide in the house of one of his beloved freedmen

BELOW Nero increasingly ignored matters of state to indulge in other pursuits

© Getty Images



THE MYTH OF THE U-BOATS

The infamous German submarines were a focus of much concern for the Allies during WWII, but how effective were these submerged naval forces in reality?

Interview by Jonathan Gordon

During the First and Second World War, Germany's submarines sought to terrorise Allied shipping lanes in the Atlantic in the hopes of cutting off supplies to their enemy. In so doing they created a lasting image of the fast-moving, impossible-to-spot U-boat terror. But how much of this impression is matched by the facts of World War II? We speak with Lawrence Paterson, author of *The U-Boat War: A Global History 1939-45*, about the real story of submersible warfare and its impact on WWII.

German U-boats have a prominent place in the public memory of WWII. What made them so effective against Allied sea power?

Actually they were not as effective as people would like to believe. The popular image of the U-boat from the Second World War probably owes more to the success of U-boats in the First World War. In 1917, faced with an increasingly effective Allied naval blockade of Germany, the Imperial German Navy staked all on a final unrestricted U-boat campaign beginning in February and waged with 'the utmost severity'. The climactic month of April witnessed 413 ships destroyed totalling 873,754-Gross Registered Tons; a figure never surpassed in either war.

By the time of the Second World War, U-boats had been relatively ignored by those tasked with prioritising German naval construction and [Nazi U-boat commander] Karl Dönitz began the conflict with only 57 U-boats, many of which were small coastal Type II models of limited range and weapon load. There was no way that such a slender force could inflict much damage upon British mercantile trade. Torpedo failures caused by design faults undetected due to incompetence and negligence on behalf of the testing institute also compromised their ability against either warship or merchant ship.

They were also hugely hampered by Allied air power, which inflicted grievous casualties on the U-boat service and forced dramatic tactical changes with no effective countermeasure.

EXPERT BIO

© Lawrence Paterson

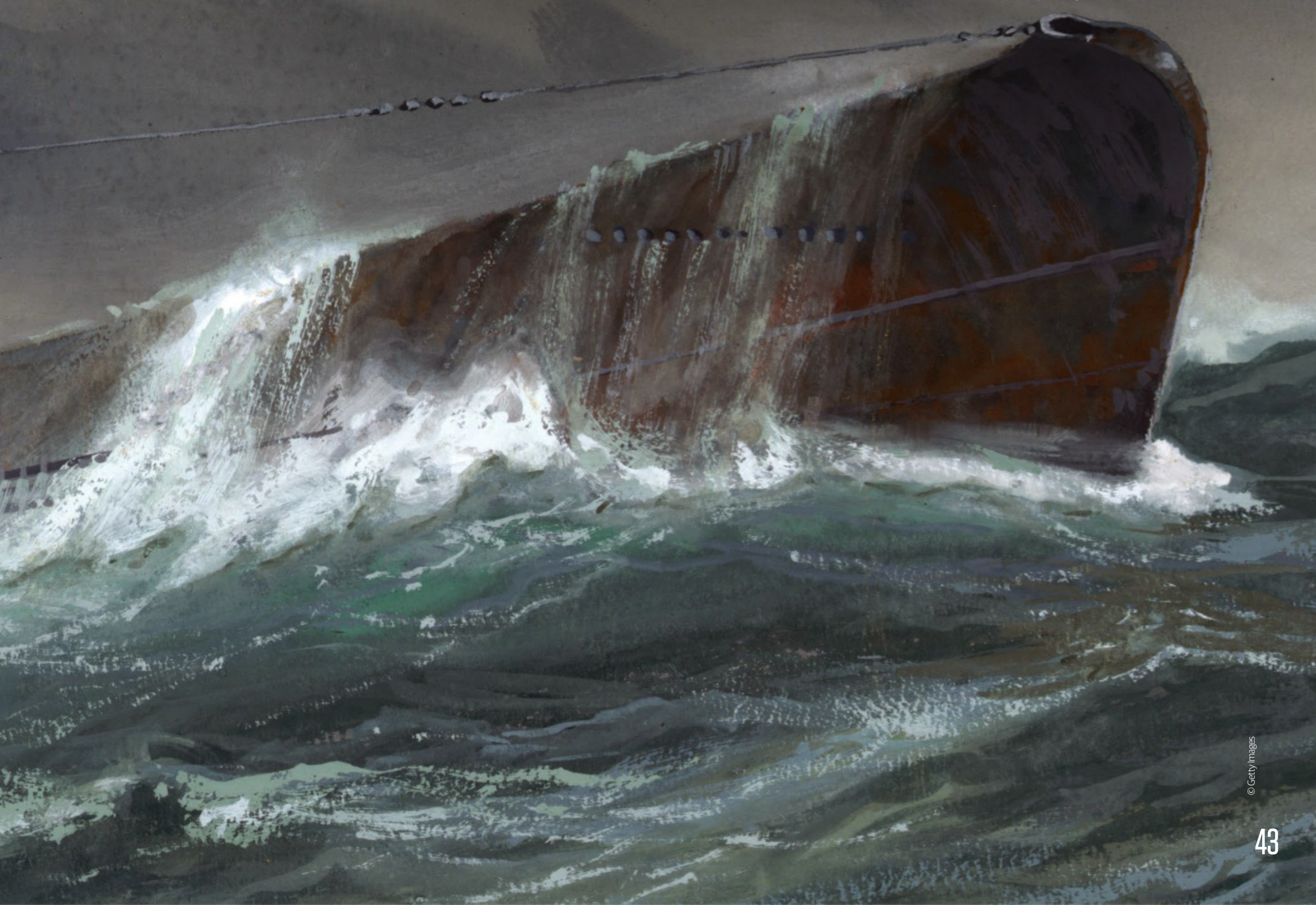
LAWRENCE PATERSON

Lawrence is a historian who has written several books on the German military, including *Hitler's Brandenburgers: The Third Reich's Elite Special Forces* and *Eagles Over The Sea 1943-45: A History of Luftwaffe Maritime Operations*.

What were some of the key technological advancements added to U-boats between 1918 and 1945?

There had been little by way of genuine technological advancement of the designs with which Dönitz entered the war. The U-boat type that would become the backbone of his force - the Type VII - was a direct descendent of the Imperial German Navy's Type UBIII. As the war progressed, the main combat types – Type II, Type VII and Type IX (cruiser U-boats) – all received technological upgrades such as improved surface targeting optics, engine improvements as well as sonar decoys, radar detectors and onboard radar. Weaponry was upgraded to include various torpedo types and strengthened anti-aircraft capabilities. However, many of these were 'reactive' changes brought about by the need to counter Allied ASW (anti-submarine warfare) improvement.

Perhaps chief among these was centimetric radar and its ability to be mounted in aircraft, robbing U-boats of the cover of darkness and forcing them to submerge where their greatest assets of speed and manoeuvrability were lost. The reality is that the U-boats with which Germany waged war were more ▶



© Getty Images

'submersible' than submarine. They were most effective when attacking surfaced in darkness where diesel engine speed, agility and the low silhouette all gave them a tremendous advantage against escorting warships and merchant targets. Once forced underwater they were slow and, as ASDIC (later known as sonar) improved, they were prone to detection.

Genuine technological development had taken place, but it involved either models that entered the war far too late to make any difference: the Type XXI and Type XXIII 'electro-boats' which were faster underwater and possessed extreme endurance submerged; or that never reached operational status: the 'Walter boats' that attempted to use hydrogen peroxide propulsion in place of traditional diesel-electric.

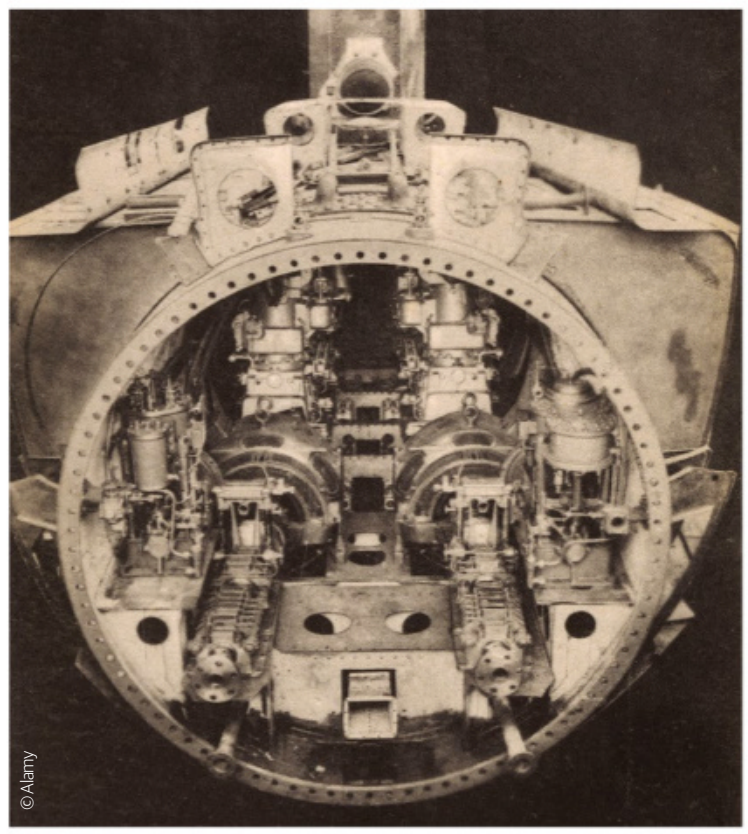
We tend to think about U-boats operating mostly in the Atlantic, but where else were they deployed?

They were deployed everywhere that the Kriegsmarine operated. U-boats were operational in all parts of the Atlantic (North, Central and South) as well as the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, Arctic Ocean, Barents Sea, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and even the Pacific Ocean, where U862 sank Liberty ship SS Robert J Walker southeast of Sydney on Christmas Eve 1944. In that sense, the only ocean that U-boats never sailed in was the Southern Ocean.

Could you give us an example of how U-boats were involved in operations with other branches of the German military?

There were some deployments that were specifically in support of ground operations. Chief among those would be the failure to protect naval troop landings in Norway during April 1940, but also the despatch of U-boats to the Mediterranean to intercept Allied troop resupply to Tobruk and also within the Black Sea where six small Type II U-boats predominantly acted in operations designed in support of coastal ground fighting.

U-boats were also used on occasion to land Brandenburger commandos and Abwehr agents (the latter as far afield as the United States) but probably the most noteworthy cooperation was with the Luftwaffe. Dönitz had long requested Luftwaffe reconnaissance support in the search for Atlantic convoy traffic and was constantly thwarted by largely ineffectual attempts by the Luftwaffe to fulfil this role. The head of the navy Grossadmiral Erich Raeder had fought a long wrangling battle against Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring for the establishment of an independent naval air arm, but ultimately failed.



© Alamy

TOP U-boats enjoyed most success when surfaced, as they remained a tough target to hit in some conditions

ABOVE The cross section of a U-boat engine room

However, despite this fractious relationship between Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe, there were occasional successes, perhaps most notably during February 1941. After cruiser Admiral Hipper left Brest harbour [in France] following routine maintenance, five KG40 Focke-Wulf Fw 200 aircraft attacked convoy HG53 in cooperation with Nicolai Clausen's U37, which had reported the convoy off Cape St Vincent [in Portugal]. Clausen sank two ships before shadowing and transmitting position reports for both the Luftwaffe and Admiral Hipper. Condors bombed and sank four ships, heavily damaging a fifth, while one Fw 200 hit by anti-aircraft fire crash landed in Portugal. Sinking British freighter Brandenburg the following day, Clausen transmitted beacon signals attempting to bring Admiral Hipper into action against HG53, but failed, although the cruiser sank a straggler on 11 February. Instead, Admiral Hipper abandoned the chase and attacked [convoy] SL64, destroying seven of its 19 ships. For the first time a capital ship, U-boat and aircraft had cooperated in action with some degree of success.

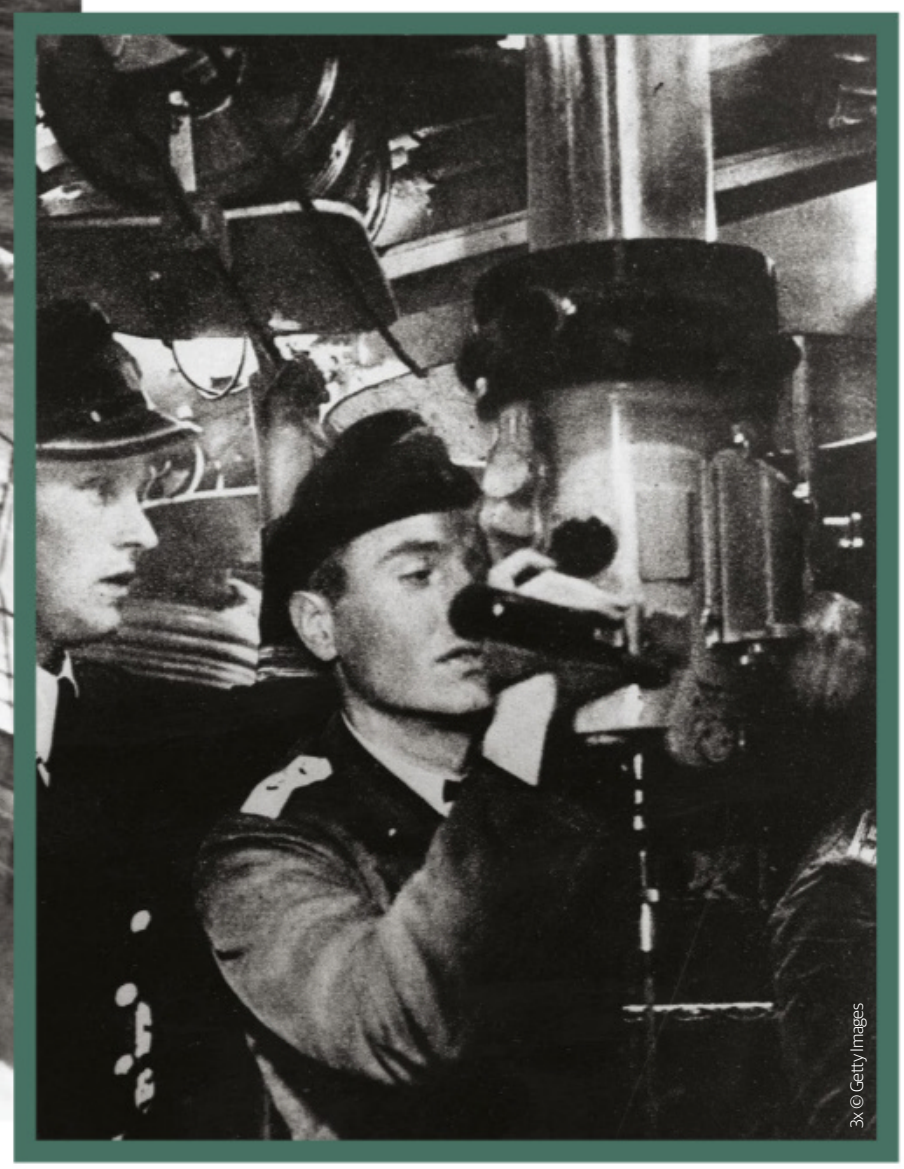
What are some of the biggest misconceptions about U-boats and how they were used in WWII?

Perhaps the largest misconception was how effective they actually were and how close they may have come to achieving their main ambition of starving Britain into submission by interdiction of Atlantic convoys. Though experiencing sporadic successes, particularly in late 1941 during several bloody convoy

BELOW
An example of a German Kriegsmarine U-boat crusher cap

© Alamy

LEFT A U-boat under attack from American B-25 Mitchell and B-24 Liberator bombers shortly before it was sunk



3x © Getty Images

ABOVE A German submariner learning how to use the periscope, 1941

battles that resulted in heavy merchant losses, they never came close to sinking the number of ships required by Dönitz's mathematical 'tonnage war' in which the amount of available merchant capacity was reduced to a level in which Britain could no longer sustain itself.

Of course, sweeping statements like that tend to infer statistics more than real life and in no way diminish the terror and destruction wrought in such actions. Casualties among both friend and foe were heavy and the horror of sinking and burning ships and U-boats could never be fully appreciated unless you had experienced it first-hand.

> **"The idea of massed Wolfpacks romping through Allied convoys is largely mythological"**

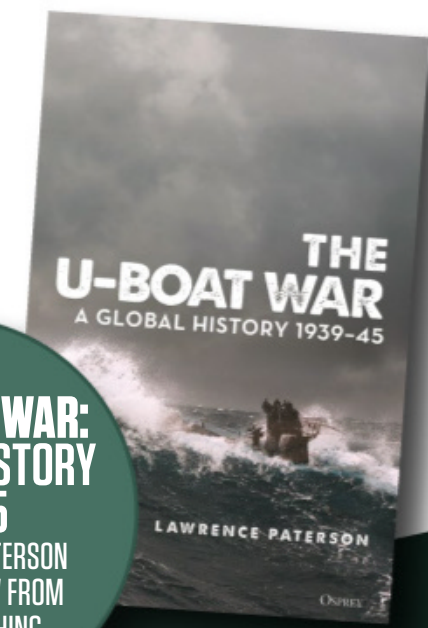
But the idea of massed Wolfpacks romping through Allied convoys is largely mythological. Certain commanders such as Otto Kretschmer, Günther Prien and Erich Topp are seared into the collective consciousness through their extreme daring, skill and bravery in the way they operated their U-boats; attacking surfaced and penetrating inside a convoy body to open fire at near point-blank range. But they were hardly the norm of U-boat commanders and represented the best of the pre-war U-boat officers that had received ample training during peacetime.

To once again revert to statistics, of 1,394 wartime U-boat commanders – including those in training – 847 (60 percent) failed to sink a single ship. The majority of those that were successful in either destroying a ship or causing it to be declared a constructive loss accounted for between one and five ships (399 commanders, 29 percent); a further 66 (five percent) sank between six and ten ships; while 82 (six percent) destroyed over ten vessels. In the Royal Navy's post-war analysis of U-boat logs they summed up: "Most of the shipping casualties were inflicted by a large body of low-performance individuals."

What are the big takeaways you hope readers will get from your book, The U-Boat War?

Perhaps that the U-boat war was not really a single 'campaign' but an interlocking series of geographically diverse operations, and nowhere near as one-sided as it is often portrayed. The Atlantic convoy war may have been the centrepoint of Dönitz's strategy, but it was neither the only, nor the most successful, of the U-boats' theatres of action. Also, there was really no 'Happy Time' for the U-boats as they suffered casualties from the outset and struggled with faulty weaponry, declining technology and flawed tactics. U-boat men fought in conditions of extreme privation on missions that sometimes lasted over six months at sea in cramped conditions aboard relatively primitive submarines.

Ultimately, like all histories of war, it is a story about people and their exploits, both positive and negative. By that token, it is also interesting how the personalities of those in authority influenced the conduct of the U-boats' war and those fighting to counter them.



THE U-BOAT WAR: A GLOBAL HISTORY 1939-45
BY LAWRENCE PATERSON IS AVAILABLE NOW FROM OSPREY PUBLISHING

EMPRESS MATILDA

LOST QUEEN OF ENGLAND

How the formidable empress fought tooth and nail for her rightful place on the English throne

Written by Emily Staniforth

Empress Matilda was a major political player of the 12th century. Heir to the throne, granddaughter of William the Conqueror and Malcolm III of Scotland and adversary of King Stephen, she led a remarkable life for a medieval woman. Her resolve to rightfully claim the throne of England by any means necessary, casting aside the expectations of her sex, made her an intimidating opponent who would stop at nothing to achieve her aim. But what is her story? As the almost-queen of England, the tale of her life has been somewhat lost, overshadowed by the success of her descendants.

Matilda was born in February 1102 in a small village in Oxfordshire. The first child of King Henry I of England, Duke of Normandy, and his wife Edith-Matilda of Scotland, Matilda was a true princess. Royal blood ran through her veins. Unfortunately, being born a girl meant that she was highly unlikely to inherit the throne of England. Those odds became slimmer with the birth of her younger brother and heir to throne, William Adelin, in 1103.

The direction of Matilda's life was decided for her in 1109 when, like many royal daughters, she was betrothed to a man for her family's political gain. The man in question was the extremely powerful Emperor Henry V, who ruled over the area of Europe that later became known as the Holy Roman Empire. At the time of their betrothal, Emperor Henry was 23 years old and Matilda was seven. A large dowry was paid by King Henry to the emperor for his marriage to Matilda, and in return the king gained the prestige of an alliance with one of the most influential men in Europe.

Despite not yet being married to the emperor, Matilda was sent to live at the German court at the age of eight. Being thrown into an unfamiliar environment would be daunting for anyone, but Matilda appears to have thrived in her new surroundings. She was educated to an exceptionally high standard, becoming fluent in three languages and knowledgeable of politics and international relations. The emperor had been clear in his intentions to follow the German custom of finding not just a wife but a skilled and capable consort. Matilda certainly did not disappoint.

Just before her 12th birthday, Matilda was married to Emperor Henry in a lavish ceremony at Worms, and in 1116 she and Henry headed to Rome for Matilda's coronation as empress. After the ceremony, the emperor returned to Germany, leaving his new empress to rule over Italy in his name. As a teenager, Matilda had her first taste of successful independent rule.

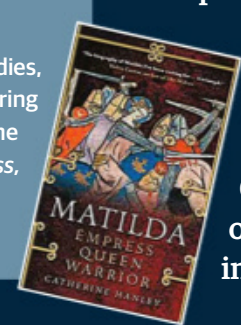
In 1120, a maritime disaster changed the course of Matilda's life. The sinking of the White Ship in the English Channel resulted in the deaths of approximately 300 people, including Matilda's brother and

EXPERT BIO

© Jeni Nott

CATHERINE HANLEY

Dr Catherine Hanley is a historian of Medieval Studies, specialising in warfare during the Middle Ages. She is the author of *Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior* (Yale University Press, 2019).



All images: © Alamy Main font and background: © Getty Images

ABOVE This engraving shows Empress Matilda turning away Matilda of Boulogne, who is pleading for her husband's release. The event never happened and the image is designed to vilify Matilda

heir to the English throne, William Adelin. William was the only legitimate son of Henry I. King Henry, whose wife, Queen Edith, had died two years previously, remarried in an attempt to father a legitimate son. Unfortunately, the king and his new queen, Adeliza of Louvain, did not have any children.

To make matters worse, in 1125 Emperor Henry V died of cancer. Matilda was left a widow at the age of 23, and went back to England in 1126 to rejoin her father's court. King Henry had realised that he had few options available to him when appointing his heir. If he chose his nephew, William Clito, his position as king would have been untenable as Clito's father, Robert Curthose, was Henry's elder brother who had been passed over by William I. The selection of Clito as heir would have raised questions as to why Henry was king to begin with.

Henry was determined to ensure his line held on to the crown, even if it meant breaking tradition. Matilda was his only legitimate descendant, so during Christmas 1127 Henry made the barons of England swear an oath to accept Matilda as queen of England upon his death. "Henry was the sort of man who, if you disobeyed him, would cut your hand off, or have your eyes gouged out, or throw you out of the top of a tall tower. So it may not have even crossed his mind that people would disobey him," Dr Catherine Hanley, historian and author of *Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior*, tells us.

A year after these oaths, Matilda was living in France with her new husband, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou. She was thoroughly unimpressed by the marriage as her husband, who was 15 years old, was her junior and held a much more insignificant title than the emperor. The pair spent some of the early years of their marriage apart when Matilda returned to England without Geoffrey.

A reconciliation between the two saw the births of their first son, Henry, in 1133, and their second, Geoffrey, in 1134. But the death of King Henry in 1135 started a chain of events that would lead to a long period of civil war in England known as The Anarchy.

> "BEFORE MATILDA HAD A CHANCE TO CLAIM HER RIGHTFUL PLACE ON THE THRONE, IT HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN"

At the time of Henry I's death, Matilda was still in Anjou. It is unlikely that she would have heard of her father's demise for a few days but by the time she did, an unlikely candidate had entered the competition for the crown.

RIGHT The wedding feast of Matilda and Emperor Henry V depicted in the *Cronica Francorum*

FAR-RIGHT Stephen was captured by Matilda's forces at the Battle of Lincoln

Stephen of Blois was the son of Henry I's sister, Adela. Upon hearing the news of the king's death, Stephen raced from his home in Boulogne to Westminster and was crowned king of England and duke of Normandy.

"The primary factor that made you a monarch was not being next in line or being the designated successor, it was having a coronation. That was the all-important thing. If you weren't the next in line but then you were crowned, you were the king no matter who you were before," explains Hanley. "The English monarch was not only crowned but also anointed – it was a religious ceremony too and that showed God's approval. So once you had been crowned, and you had been anointed, that did really set you apart from anyone who hadn't undergone that."

With two young children and without any resources, Matilda was powerless against her cousin. Her husband, Geoffrey, led regular raids into Normandy against Stephen's forces with little success. It wasn't until 1138 that Matilda's fortune changed. Her half-brother, Robert of Gloucester (the oldest of Henry I's many illegitimate children), defected from Stephen's cause and joined Matilda's campaign. With his lands and resources, she was able to begin her crusade to win back her promised crown.

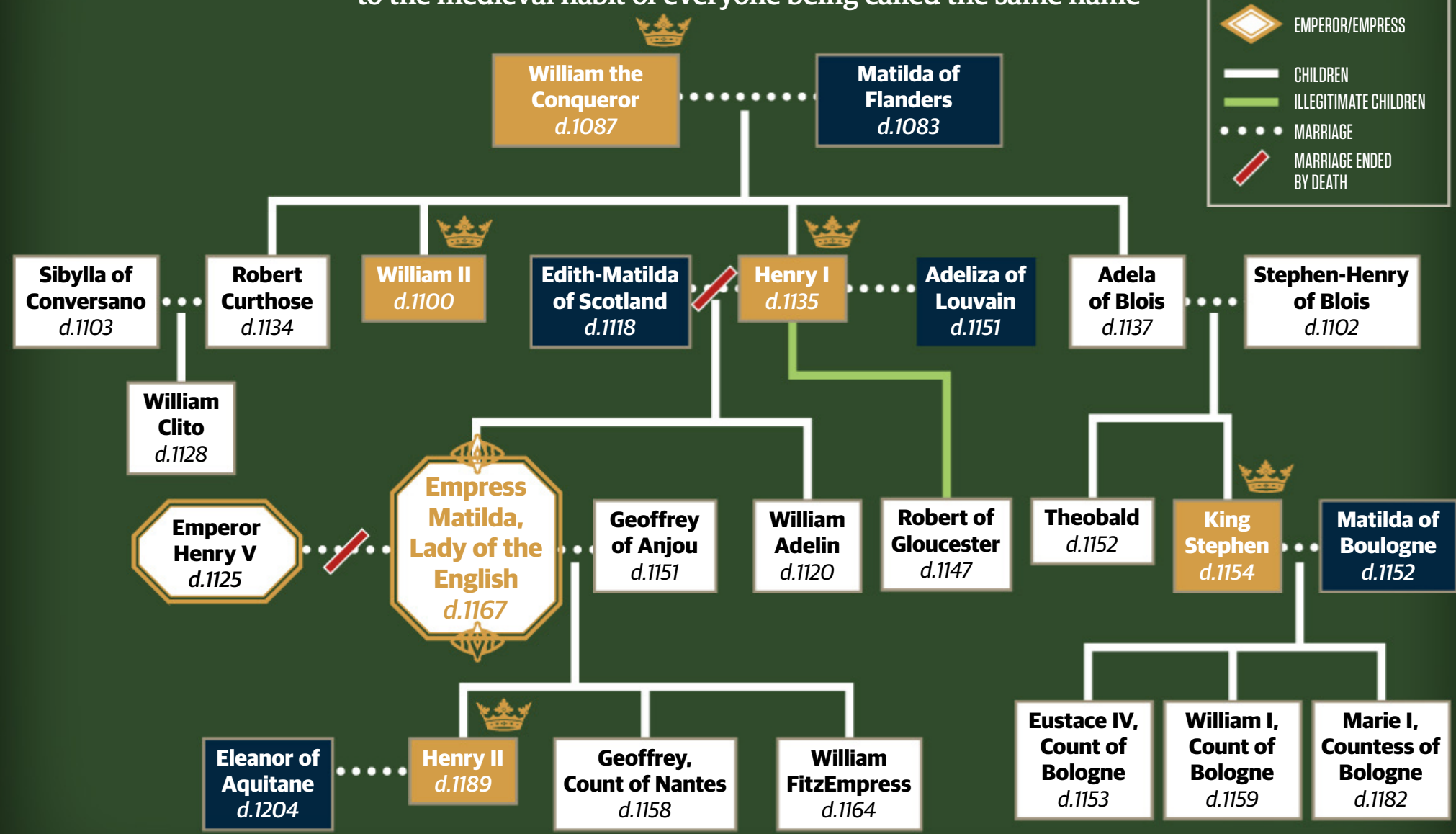
Matilda and Robert landed in England in September 1139, with Robert heading to Bristol and Matilda to Arundel. There, she sought the protection of her stepmother, the dowager Queen Adeliza. At this point, Matilda had not posed any immediate threat to Stephen, and so he was in a difficult situation.

"It's the one time in her life that being female did Matilda a favour. Stephen was in a lose-lose situation because he has got to think of the optics," says Hanley. "If he attacks two women, one of whom is the widow of the previous king, everyone is going to think what a horrible bully that man is. The way that Adeliza and Matilda went about it was very, very clever. They put it out publicly that it was just a social call, which put Stephen on the wrong foot." Stephen, foolishly, allowed Matilda to leave Arundel and travel safely to Bristol, where she met with Robert, before continuing to Gloucester Castle.

For two years neither side made much progress. But Matilda remained resolute in her aim to claim the crown, despite opposition. "She saw herself as being the equal of those around her: she was equal or superior to them in birth, intelligence

MATILDA'S FAMILY TREE

The descendants of William the Conqueror are easily confused due to the medieval habit of everyone being called the same name



and political experience. She perhaps just couldn't accept that other people couldn't get past the fact that she was a woman," suggests Hanley.

The turning point of the war between the cousins came at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141. Having stayed close to the areas of England that were loyal to them (for Matilda the south-west and for Stephen the south-east), Stephen's decision to move up to Lincoln provided Matilda with an opportunity. As for Matilda's part in the battle, Hanley says: "The important thing to remember is that she was not physically there. This was one of the main disadvantages of being the female leader of her cause. She couldn't lead armies into battle, which is why having her brother working for her helped. That doesn't mean that she wasn't the general doing the strategising." Robert of Gloucester led Matilda's forces to Lincoln, where they fought and captured King Stephen. With Stephen in custody, Matilda headed to Westminster to be crowned queen.

ABOVE
A depiction of Matilda escaping from Oxford Castle, camouflaged in white against the snow

Her success at Lincoln meant Matilda was proclaimed 'Lady of the English' before her coronation. But she still had a problem: some of the barons who had aligned themselves with Matilda had done so in opposition to Stephen rather than in support of her. Now, they were faced with the genuine prospect of a woman sitting on the throne.

Matilda was perceived to be troublesome by the men around her. A reputation for being bossy and domineering plagued her throughout her life, contributing to the resistance of the English people to accept her as their monarch. Hanley, however, believes Matilda's reputation needs rehabilitating: "Matilda had two of the best possible examples [of kingship]. Her father and her first husband were both considered to be really good monarchs because they were so authoritarian nobody dared to disobey them. But when she tried to do the same, nobody could accept it."

The barons were spared the 'horror' of a female ruler through the interference of an unlikely saviour. Stephen's wife, Matilda of Boulogne, resolved to save her husband from incarceration. Raising an army, she marched on London, besieging the surrounding areas and causing Empress Matilda to flee the city the night before her coronation. From there, Matilda headed to Winchester, followed by Matilda of Boulogne and her army. Once inside the city walls, Matilda of Boulogne and Henry, Bishop of Winchester (Stephen's brother), besieged Matilda's forces, eventually causing her to flee once again while Robert of Gloucester was captured. Matilda of Boulogne offered to release Robert in return for the release of Stephen. Matilda had no choice but to submit to her demands.

In a cruel twist for Empress Matilda, Matilda of Boulogne was celebrated for her heroism in her mission to save Stephen. "Matilda of Boulogne does all the things that Matilda has been doing and everyone's talking about how wonderful she is. It's not fair the way they were portrayed," says Hanley. The double standards were astounding: it was acceptable for a woman to act like a king if she was doing so for the sake of her husband, but not if she was doing it for her own benefit.

"When you've won the battle, you've captured your opponent, you've put him in prison and you've been declared the monarch but people still won't accept you, it's never going to happen. This is when Matilda started to change her strategy," explains Hanley.

Matilda's last encounter with Stephen took place in Oxford in 1142, where she had strategically positioned herself to be close to London. While there, Stephen took the opportunity to besiege Oxford to put an end to Matilda's threat once and for all. For more than two months, Stephen's forces ravaged the city while Matilda was trapped inside the fortress of Oxford Castle. One wintry night in December, realising she had no other choice, Matilda and her men made a daring escape from St George's Tower,

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Matilda and her many names

Empress Matilda may be an unfamiliar name to many but this might be because she is sometimes referred to by a different name. In many accounts of Matilda's life she is called Maude, and even sometimes Adelaide. Often believed to be a way of differentiating her from the many Matildas of the time, it is unclear where her alternative names originate from. In the medieval period the repetitive use of certain names was not uncommon. Within the circle of Matilda's contemporaries there are several Henrys, Williams and Roberts as well as Matildas. However, Hanley does not agree with those who posit that the variations on Matilda's name are a way to separate her from others: "People say, as an excuse, that it's just to differentiate her from everyone else that's called Matilda at the time, but it's really noticeable that they only do that to her. I don't notice anyone rushing to call William the Conqueror 'Billy' just because there are so many other people called William." In fact, Hanley, who only refers to the empress as Matilda, thinks calling her Maude was a way to insult Matilda and stain her memory. "I actually think that calling her Maud is deliberately derogatory. It's trying to do her down, which is why I just don't use it," she says. "She called herself Matilda. There is an argument that Maude is like a shortening of Mathildes in Latin, but again, why only her? Why not any of the men?" It is true that Matilda of Boulogne or William the Conqueror's wife Matilda of Flanders are never called Maude. It is, therefore, important for Empress Matilda's legacy for her to be afforded the right to her own name, just like the other Matildas.

ABOVE Matilda was proclaimed Lady of the English ahead of her doomed coronation

dressed all in white to camouflage themselves against the snow. After crossing the frozen Thames and sneaking through the enemy lines, they walked the 10km from Oxford to Abingdon, evading Stephen's forces.

On escaping from Oxford, Matilda was reunited with her eldest son, Henry, who had been brought to England by Robert. From this point onwards, Matilda, having realised that a woman would not be an acceptable candidate for the throne in her time, introduced a new rhetoric: her battle for the crown was being fought on behalf of her son Henry, the grandson of old King Henry.

For the next few years, she resided at the court she had set up at Devizes. The Anarchy continued, but with no great advances made by either side. As Matilda's son, Henry, grew older, he began to take the lead role in challenging Stephen and Matilda took a back seat. In 1148 she returned to Normandy, which was now under the control of her husband, Geoffrey. She rebuilt her court in Rouen and spent her time focussing her skills and efforts on the administration of her realm.

Back in England, Stephen was facing a difficult choice. "England has been at war for so long now with Stephen and Matilda that people are starting to look back at the reign of Henry I as some kind of halcyon age of peace, when everything was in order because the king was in charge," says Hanley. "People just want to go back to that. The barons are absolutely sick of [war] and some of them start making private arrangements to agree not to fight against each other."

> "MATILDA PERHAPS JUST COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT OTHER PEOPLE COULDN'T GET PAST THE FACT THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN"

Matilda's propaganda campaign to position the young Henry as the true heir to the throne was so effective that Stephen had very little choice. In an ironic twist of fate, just like Henry I and his nephew, Stephen couldn't name Henry as heir without questions being asked as to why he wasn't king already. But, unlike Henry I, Stephen had a foolproof solution. In a final kick in the teeth for Matilda, Stephen effectively adopted Henry and appointed him as his heir. Matilda's son was next in line to the throne, but she was pushed aside. After the death of King Stephen in 1154, King Henry II was crowned.

"Henry II was a great king and he was a great warrior but he would never have even been there if it hadn't been for Matilda," explains Hanley. "If Matilda hadn't decided to make this claim to the throne in the first place, the man we know as Henry II would have been the count of Anjou. Matilda won, but it was at a great cost."

Matilda died in Normandy in 1167 at the age of 65. She had spent the last years of her life advising her son, King Henry II. Her tomb lies in Rouen cathedral and her epitaph reads: "Great by birth, greater by marriage, greatest in her offspring: here lies Matilda, the daughter, wife and mother of Henry." It is an ill-fitting tribute to the formidable woman who defied expectation and was so very nearly crowned as the first queen of England. Her determination, bravery and political acumen ensured she would not be forgotten, and her struggle for the crown culminated in her status as the mother of the Plantagenets, the longest ruling dynasty in English history.

THE SECRETS OF ALCHEMY

Far more than turning metal into gold, this ancient art has a rich history that covers chemistry, esotericism and philosophy

Written by Callum McKelvie

The dream of turning metal into gold is one that has obsessed man for centuries. The name of this mythical process is 'alchemy' and it's a word that inspires thoughts of medieval magic and the dark arts. To quote the scientist and scholar Lawrence Principe in his seminal work *The Secrets of Alchemy*: "The very word conjures up vivid images of the hidden, the mysterious and the arcane, of dark laboratories and wizard-like figures bent over glowing fires and bubbling cauldrons." Yet from the ancient world through to the medieval period and into the 20th century alchemy was a very real art, practised the world over. So much more than simply being another quest for gold, it was a complex form of speculative thought that also held promises of eternal youth. The history of alchemy is complex, blurring the lines between chemistry, esoteric ramblings and bizarre philosophy. Here we hope to offer a tantalising glimpse into another realm, digging beneath the surface to unearth at least a few of its secrets. We'll reveal the mystery of the Philosopher's Stone, explain the scientific impact of this ancient art and explore the life of the real Nicolas Flamel, among other wonders.

Alchemy is best known as a form of medieval chemical science and speculative philosophy. Its origins, however, both real and imagined, are far older than that. Traditional histories of alchemy state that the art began in Egypt, in line with the ancient Greek belief of Egypt as land of magic and secrets; this is called Egyptosophy, described by Eric Hornung as "the study of an imaginary Egypt viewed as the profound source of all esoteric lore". Following the conquest of the land by Alexander the Great during his campaigns of 334-323 BCE, Egypt became a vibrant centre of ideas and culture. It is from this period that the Leiden and Stockholm papyri (named after the museums they now reside in) date. According to Principe these texts "contain about 250 practical workshop recipes," including how to make imitations of valuable substances, such as how to colour silver to look like gold. However, while these papyri are perhaps the seed for much of what was to come, they lack the philosophical angle that would later define the practice and do not appear to discuss a physical transmutation. Despite the testimony of many later texts, these are the only two surviving documents from this period that have a link to the alchemical art. Later Byzantine compilations contain excerpts of some

© Alamy

© Getty Images

Greco-Roman works, but it is not enough to build a complete picture of the important early days of alchemy.

It was around 300 CE that arguably the first great alchemist was active: Zosimos of Panopolis, a practitioner whose work would define much of what was to come. Born, as his name might suggest, in Panopolis in Egypt, Zosimos composed a total of 28 works on chemistry – including one that contains the oldest beer recipe in the world. It is also with Zosimos that much of the magical and occult aspects of alchemy begin. He theorised that the universe was an expression of numbers and symbols, and discussed the effect that the stars and other celestial bodies had on mankind and the work of the alchemist. Zosimos was also integral in introducing the element of secrecy to the world of the alchemist, which led to many later alchemical works being written in code or metaphor.

Perhaps Zosimos' most famous work is *The Stone of Philosophy*, which describes a mysterious substance that very soon became the main goal of the alchemist. The 'stone' was most likely a potion or some form of powder that could be created in a laboratory, as opposed to a natural rock-like object. One alchemical text, *A Brief Guide to the Celestial Ruby*, states that: "Know, then, that it is called a stone, not because it is like a stone, but only because, by virtue of its fixed nature, it resists the action of fire as successfully as any stone. In species it is gold, more pure than the purest; it is fixed and incombustible like a stone, but its appearance is that of very fine powder, impalpable to the touch, sweet to the taste, fragrant to the smell." The stone was said to have many mysterious properties and, as well as turning metal into gold, it may also have held the secret to eternal life and immortality. Zosimos translated the work of Maria Hebrea (sometimes referred to as Mary the Jewess), who described two methods through which an alchemist could fabricate the stone. However, it is now understood that these may in fact have been processes to imitate the look of certain metals, similar to the earlier Egyptian texts.

ABOVE This painting by David Ryckaert III presents the clichéd image of the alchemist as an elderly man pouring over forgotten manuscripts

ABOVE Nicolas Flamel may be a name familiar to Harry Potter fans, as this real bookseller had a connection to alchemy

"THE HISTORY OF ALCHEMY IS COMPLEX, BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN CHEMISTRY, ESOTERIC RAMBLINGS AND BIZARRE PHILOSOPHY"

The Islamic Golden Age of 622 to 1258 was also a key period in the development of the alchemical tradition. It was during this time that the word alchemy may have first emerged, with the Arabic 'al' (meaning 'the') being added as a prefix. The word's origins are often disputed, with some believing it comes from the Egyptian word 'khem' meaning 'blackness'. The most prominent Islamic alchemist during this period was Jábir ibn Háyyan, considered the father of Arab chemistry. According to alchemical legend, Jábir was the author of between 300 and a 1,000 manuscripts on alchemy and lived until the ripe old age of 94.

During the medieval period the work of an alchemist known as 'Geber' became increasingly important. For years Geber was incorrectly assumed to be Jábir, his writings circulated under a Latinised name. However, it is now suspected that some of these later works were in fact authored by a Spanish-Arab monk or alchemist located on the peninsula who, as well as translating the work of the original Jábir, also signed his own works under the earlier alchemist's name. According to Principe "the author concealed behind the pseudonym of Geber is probably an Italian Franciscan friar and lecturer named Paul of Taranto," due to the latter having written a work incredibly similar in style and content to that of Geber's.

By the time we reach the medieval period alchemy had begun to fully develop into a pseudoscience with a philosophy all of its own. One of the main philosophies of medieval alchemy was the notion that four elements (earth, fire, air and water) composed all matter. Jábir, or possibly Geber, had added two further elements: sulphur and mercury. It was the Swiss physician Paracelsus who introduced the ▶

Who was the Count St Germain?

He claimed to have lived for 500 years and possessed a knowledge of all things

In 18th century France, the mysterious Count of St Germain appeared as if from nowhere, and from 1745-84 wooed the nobility with his skills as an adventurer, philosopher and, of course, alchemist. Who exactly this enigmatic man was remains something of a mystery, and in the centuries since his appearance he has become shrouded in legend and been the subject of numerous folk tales. Of St Germain's early years little is known, perhaps due to the man himself wishing to keep his origins a secret – but he soon developed a mystic air. One of the first sightings of the count was when the author of the gothic thriller The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole, mentions him having been arrested for spying in 1745. The count's knowledge of a variety of subjects meant he quickly inspired a certain level of awe. Voltaire purportedly met the count once and described him as "a man who knows everything and who never dies." However, despite this enigmatic reputation he was a very real individual who worked as a diplomat for France.

Despite the count passing away in 1784, his mystical reputation ensured that in the successive centuries he remained a figure of interest for those with a taste for the occult. The esoteric Theosophical movement claimed the Count of St Germain as a legendary spiritual master and key figure to its religion. Many of its members, including CW Leadbeater and Annie Besant, claimed to have met him in the centuries after his death, with a variety of stories claiming that he was over 500 years old.

As his mystical reputation grew, the count (like Flamel before him) became a source on which literary fantasists could draw. Famous Russian author Alexander Pushkin used the count as an enigmatic mystical figure in his 1834 short story *The Queen of Spades*, drawing on the supernatural elements of his legend. The 1949 film adaptation would portray him as a figure of fear, akin to the devil himself.

BELOW Poster for the 1949 film version of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*, which portrays the count as a figure of fear

Who was Fulcanelli?

The author who may have found the secrets of eternal youth and turning metal into gold

Fulcanelli is the name used by the French author of two seminal esoteric works: *The Mystery of the Cathedrals* (1926) and *The Dwellings of the Philosophers* (1929). The former is a study of gothic cathedrals, describing the symbology found within them and its link to the tradition of alchemy. Yet one of the attractions of these works is not just the texts themselves, but their enigmatic author. After passing the manuscripts to one of his students, Eugène Canseliet, Fulcanelli himself promptly vanished off the face of the Earth. Who exactly he was still remains a mystery and there is little information as to the identity of this peculiar figure.

Canseliet supposedly achieved the successful transmutation of 100g of lead into solid gold. He claimed to have met Fulcanelli one final time at a Spanish castle in the 1950s, stating that the master alchemist (who by then would have been in his 80s) barely looked a day over 50. It was Canseliet who published his master's works and may possibly have even been Fulcanelli himself, hiding in plain sight. According to Geneviève Dubois in *Fulcanelli and the Alchemical Revival*, one Robert Amadou notes in a series of articles that it was once confided to him by Jacques Bergier that Fulcanelli was Schwaller de Lubicz – a noted Egyptologist and mystic.

There were a variety of alleged sightings and meetings with Fulcanelli in the years following his disappearance but they are hard to verify. In 1937 Bergier, a chemical engineer and co-author of *The Morning of the Magicians*, claimed to have met a man who may have been Fulcanelli and who gave him a warning for the physicist André Helbronner about the use of nuclear weapons. This knowledge supposedly led the intelligence services to commence a hunt for the master magician. It was Bergier and his co-author Louis Pauwels who popularised the mystery of Fulcanelli when their book became a cult classic.

BELOW The evocative frontispiece to *The Mystery of the Cathedrals* (1926)

5x © Alamy

crucial element of 'salt', believing that this, along with sulphur and mercury, were the key three elements from which the earth generated all things. Paracelsus would often explain this theory by burning a piece of wood – the resultant smoke was the result of the sulphur, the smoke of the mercury and the ash was the product of the salt. The Stone of Philosophy also became increasingly important to the work of the medieval alchemist. The process of finding the stone was known as the 'magnum opus', or 'great work', and this was the central goal of the alchemist. The process had four key stages: 'nigredo' (or blackening), 'albedo' (whitening), 'citrinitas' (yellowing) and 'rubedo' (reddening or purpling). As with other aspects of alchemy this developed and changed over time, with noted alchemist and Augustinian canon Sir George Ripley introducing the concept of the 12 gates and Samuel Norton naming at least 14 different stages.

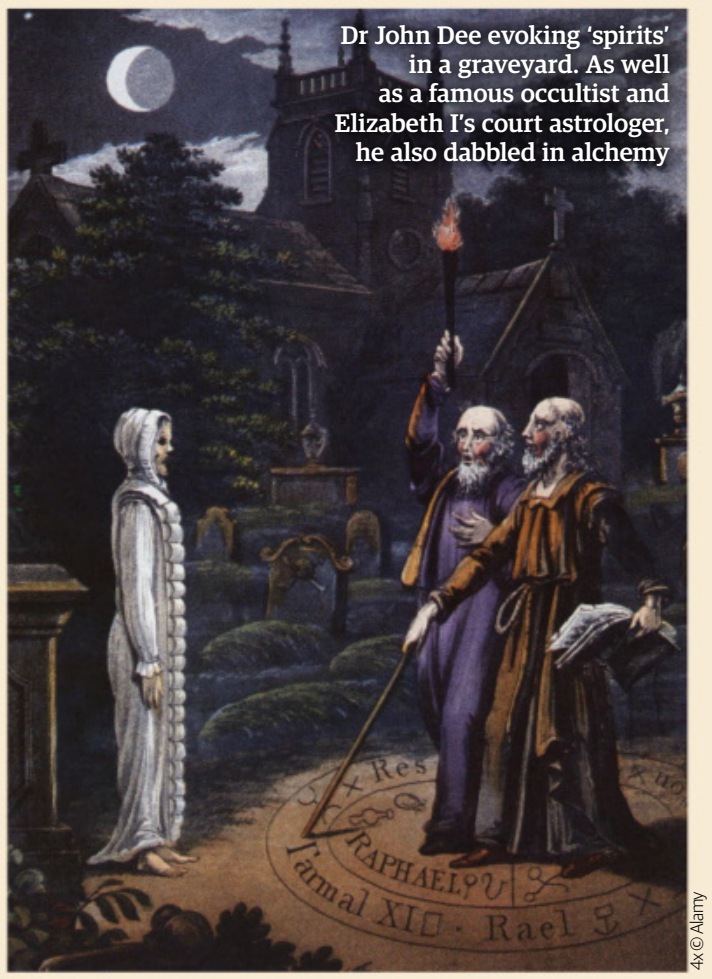
There were many famous alchemists at work during this period. Integral in the translating of many Islamic texts was the Dominican Friar Albertus Magnus (c.1200-80). Like Jábir, Magnus' later recognition meant that a variety of alchemical texts were attributed to him, whether he had actually authored them or not. One of Magnus' students was the noted theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), who would obtain his master's knowledge of alchemy, among other subjects. Another well-known alchemist during this period was Roger Bacon (1220-92), also known by the pseudonym Doctor Mirabilis. A Fransciscan friar, like other alchemists Bacon was similarly interested in the concept of extending his life through magical means. According to the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Bacon gave a recipe for an elixir of life in both his edition of the *Secretum Secretorum* and within the later chapters of his *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae*.

Yet arguably the most infamous alchemist from this period may not have even been one at all. In fact, despite having lived in the 12th and possibly 13th century, he has his mystic origins in the 17th century. Nicolas Flamel is a name now recognised due to his importance to the first Harry Potter novel and film. Like some other figures, such as Fulcanelli or the Count of St Germain, there is much hearsay and mythology surrounding Flamel, though most of this is understood to have been the product of later works. Flamel was a wealthy French scribe and manuscript seller who ran two shops with his wife Perenelle. Flamel, like all mortals, would pass away but, despite the fact that his tombstone can be viewed in the Musée de Cluny, one 17th century work ensured that his greatest legacy would be his reputation as an immortal being and his supposed discovery of the Philosopher's Stone. *Le Livre des Figures Hiéroglyphiques*, or *Exposition of the Hieroglyphical Figures*, was published in French in 1612 and in English in 1624. This book detailed how Flamel, in his work as a bookseller, had purchased a mysterious 21-page volume and later travelled to Spain to seek answers as to the book's origins. Flamel purportedly met a sage who identified the book and in the succeeding years Flamel, along with his wife, was able to translate enough of

© Getty Images

ABOVE This 16th century woodcut from the alchemical text *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine*, shows a successful making of the Philosopher's Stone

BELOW A copper engraving of an alchemist's laboratory by Joan Galle after Stradanus



Dr John Dee evoking 'spirits' in a graveyard. As well as a famous occultist and Elizabeth I's court astrologer, he also dabbled in alchemy

4x © Alamy

"LEGEND STATES FLAMEL WAS SUCCESSFUL IN HIS QUEST AND THE STONE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS WEALTH AND GRANTED HIM ETERNAL YOUTH"

it in order to decipher the recipe for the Philosopher's Stone. Legend states Flamel was successful in his quest and the stone was responsible for his immense wealth and also granted him eternal youth, leading to stories of him being sighted centuries after his death. Despite numerous criticisms of this fable, Flamel's legend as an alchemist was firmly established. Novelist Victor Hugo referenced Flamel several times in his 1833 novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and 21st century popular culture has seen a renewed interest in him, appearing in horror films such as *As Above So Below* (2014) as well as various media connected to the Harry Potter universe.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries a number of figures who today are remembered as important players in their respective fields were also dabbling in alchemy, such as Dr John Dee (1527 - 1608), who was the court astronomer to Elizabeth I as well as her spymaster. Dee is perhaps most often remembered as an all-round occultist but he was also keenly interested in alchemy, particularly the work of the aforementioned George Ripley. In Jennifer M Rampling's paper *John Dee and the Alchemists*, she notes: "During his travels in Europe during the 1560s, Dee seems to have become acquainted with a wider range of alchemical doctrines, and began to accumulate a substantial library of alchemical literature. These included up to date copies of books by Paracelsus and his followers, and a fine collection of late medieval manuscripts, many retaining Dee's annotations, as detailed in Robert & Watson's important reconstruction of John Dee's library catalogue (1990)." Dee also owned alchemical equipment and several of the outbuildings at his home were used as laboratories. However, after the arrival of the occultist Edward Kelley into his household in 1582, Dee's research began increasingly to veer into the spiritual and more esoteric realms of alchemy. Dee now seemed to be primarily interested in attempting to converse with angels as opposed to discovering the secrets of the Philosopher's Stone. Despite claiming to be a successful alchemist, it has often been suspected that Kelley was a charlatan and confidence trickster who abused Dee's beliefs and trust in him.

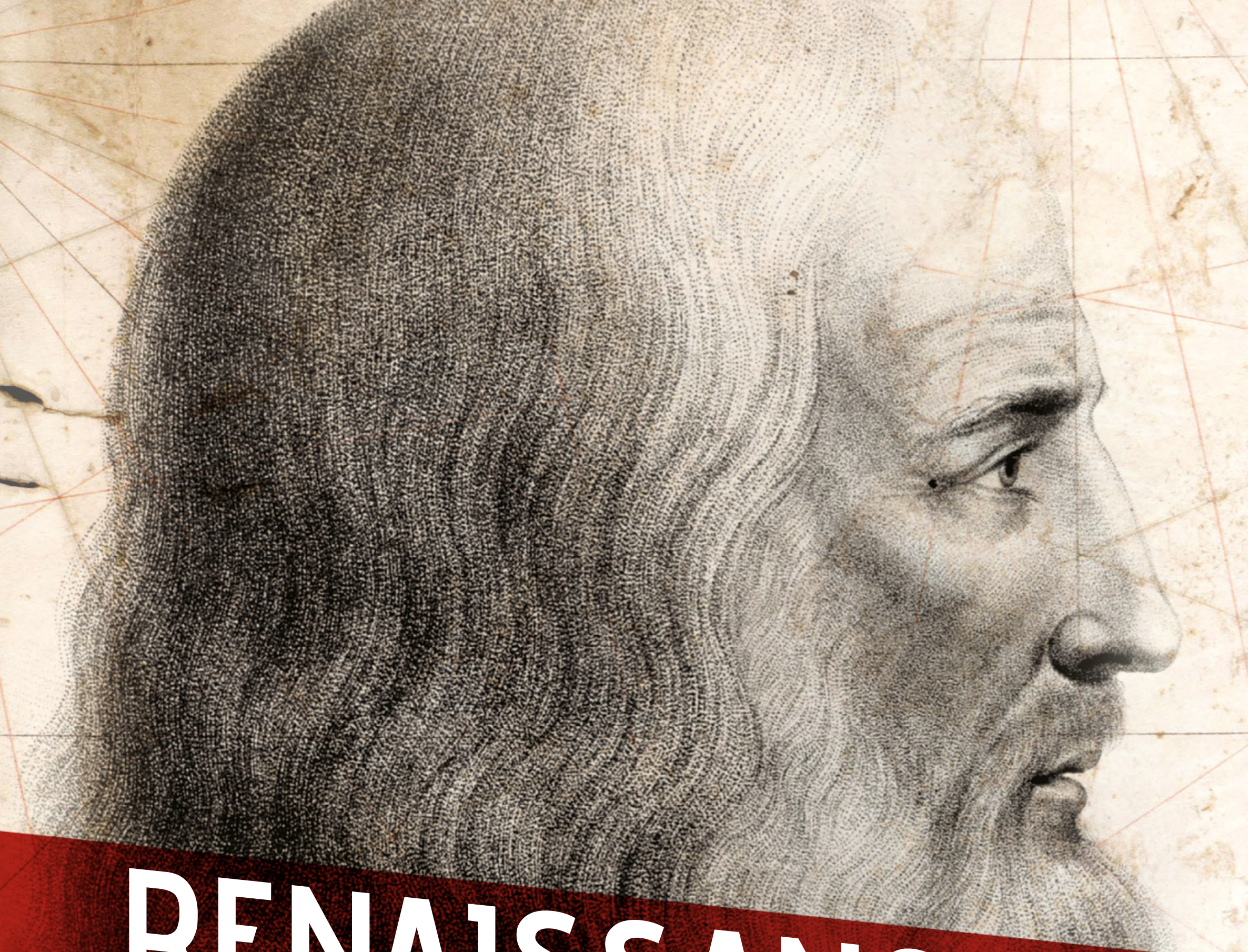
Robert Boyle (1627-91), who discovered that a gas will decrease in pressure as the volume of its container is increased, is now seen as one of the first modern chemists. Boyle himself was a committed alchemist who believed in the ability of transmutation, claiming to have witnessed it himself. Isaac Newton (1643-1727), one of the greatest physicists and mathematicians of all time, is not a name one might assume to have dabbled in such esoteric fields as alchemy, but indeed he did. While it had been known for sometime that Newton had undertaken several studies in the occult, Principe drew attention to a recipe Newton had written for a key ingredient to make the fabled Philosopher's Stone. And historian William Newman argues that alchemy was in fact responsible for Newton's thinking concerning white light. "Alchemists were the first to realise that compounds could be broken down into their constituent parts and then recombined. Newton then applied that to white light, which he deconstructed into constituent colours and then recombined," he told *National Geographic*. "That's something Newton got from alchemy."

ABOVE Isaac Newton, the physicist and mathematician who also dabbled in alchemy

BELOW By the 17th century the image of the alchemist had been fully cemented

Alchemy continued to be a subject of interest and study into the successive centuries, despite claims that it underwent something of a demise in the 18th century following its earlier golden age. In the previous centuries the concept had developed that alchemy was solely the work of charlatans and confidence tricksters. However, honest attempts at transmutation still took place. In the mid-1850s one Cyprien Théodore Tiffereau presented a series of papers outlining his experiments in transmuting metal (specifically silver) into gold, a feat he claimed to have mastered. In a similar fashion to the earlier debate concerning the elements of mercury and sulphur, Tiffereau believed that all metals were actually compounds of hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. While Tiffereau was invited to present his findings, he unfortunately failed to replicate his experiments. However, in 1899 he once again claimed that he had achieved transmutation and used his recent interest in microbiology to explain his earlier failure. A lack of airborne microorganisms, he explained, bountiful in areas surrounding precious mineral deposits such as where he'd originally conducted his experiments, had resulted in transmutation not taking place.

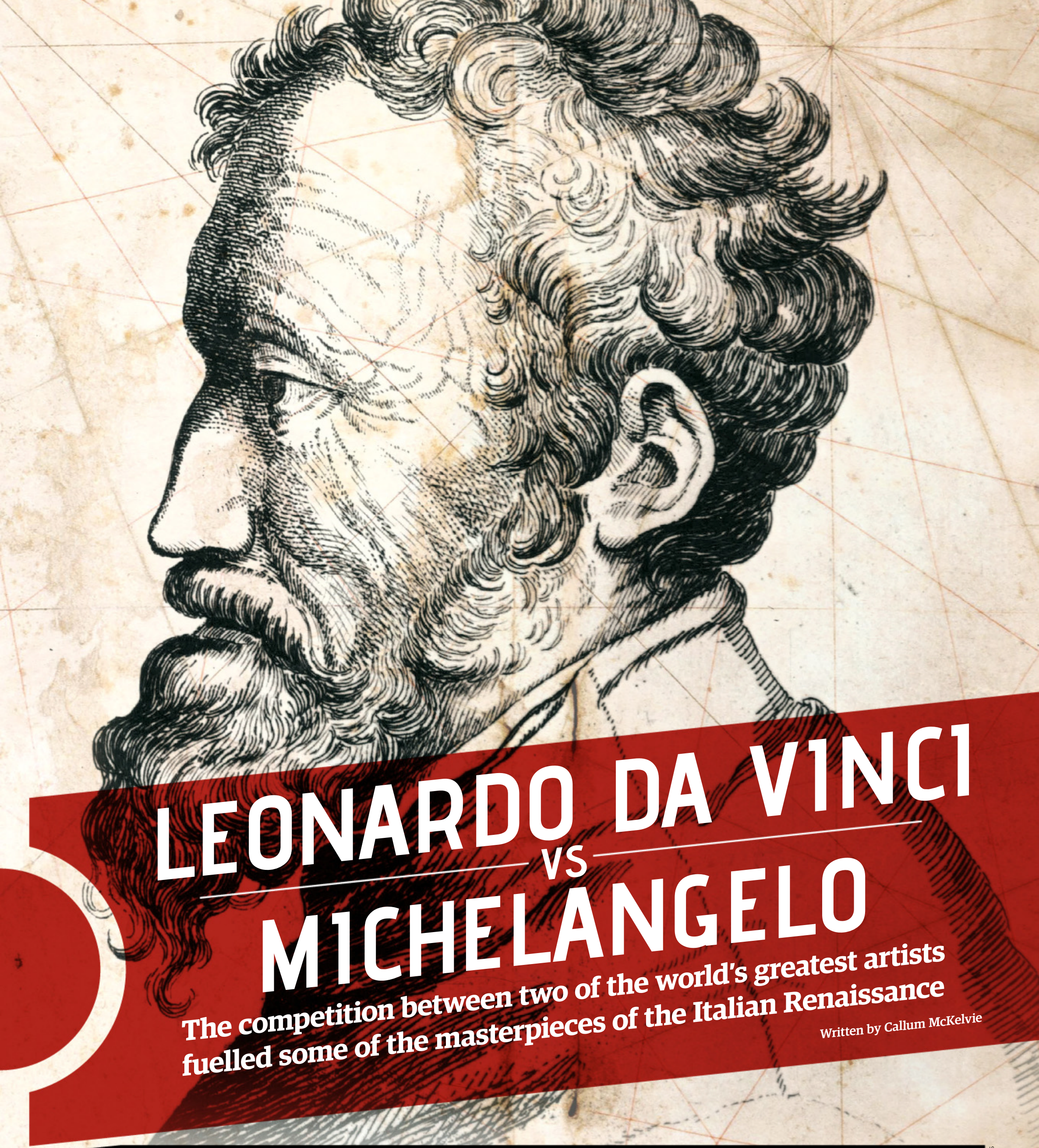
Today, alchemy is no longer viewed only as a fool's errand or the work of con men. Scientists such as Principe have recontextualised this oft-maligned art as an important piece of the history of chemistry, managing to crack some of the alchemist's codes and recreate their experiments. It was due to the work of Principe and his contemporaries, along with the revelation that key figures such as Newton had been interested in the subject, that alchemy enjoyed a 'revival' among historians of chemistry. Although much of it remains shrouded in mystery, hidden in code or wrapped in esotericism, there was often very real science behind many of their experiments. Turning metal into gold or living forever may be idle fantasies, but many of those who sought them based their experiments in what (for the time) seems to have been some rational thought. And after all, who doesn't occasionally dream of eternal youth and riches?



RENAISSANCE RIVALS

The *Mona Lisa*, with her slight smile and the statue of *David* with his impressive physique are two of the most instantly recognisable works of art. Their reputation stretches beyond that of the early modern period and makes them arguably the two most famous artworks in the entire world. It is striking to think that these two pieces were completed in roughly the same period (***Mona Lisa*** between 1503-19 and ***David*** between 1501-04) by two men who most likely knew each other personally and, if not, certainly knew each other's reputation: Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

These towering figures of the Italian Renaissance developed a bitter rivalry, as they did with other artists in the same period such as Raphael, which may have helped define



LEONARDO DA VINCI VS MICHELANGELO

The competition between two of the world's greatest artists fuelled some of the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance

Written by Callum McKelvie

each artist's work. This rivalry would see a direct artistic competition between the two when, in the early 16th century, both were commissioned to complete contrasting frescoes in the Renaissance's equivalent of the 'Thrilla in Manilla'. But was the rivalry between Leonardo and Michelangelo actually that unusual? Or was it necessary competition in a world where artists relied on wealthy patrons to fund the creation of their masterpieces?

Before we delve into the sometimes frosty relationship between these two Renaissance rivals, it's important to set the stage for our two combatants. By the early 16th century the Italian Renaissance was already in full swing. It was defined by the notion of 'humanism', which was a philosophical concept, rooted in morality, regarding man and his importance

© Getty Images

EXPERT BIO

© Bernard Galewski

MATTHEW LANDRUS

Dr Matthew Landrus is a research fellow at the university of Oxford who specialises on the history of art and science in renaissance Italy. He is the author Leonardo da Vinci's Giant Crossbow (Springer, 2010) and Leonardo da Vinci: 500 Years on (Welbeck, 2018).

in the universe. Florence, the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy, became an important centre of the Renaissance and remains a city defined by its architecture and art. In this period wealthy elites like kings and princes, well-to-do families such as the Medicis (who in the 1430s gained control of Florence itself) or even institutions like cathedrals and monasteries acted as patrons who commissioned artists and artist studios to create on their behalf. This was a period when painters, writers and thinkers could devote themselves to their art for a living, far removed from today's world where artists often have to take other jobs to support themselves and governments, in particular, seem to take little interest in financially supporting the arts.

This was the world into which Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452. Despite being the result of an out-of-wedlock affair with a young peasant woman, Caterina, the young Leonardo grew up on his father Ser Piero da Vinci's estate. At around 12-15, he became an apprentice to the artist Andrea del Verrocchio in whose workshop he learnt painting and sculpture and developed his interest in the mechanical arts – already crafting a number of technical sketches for which he would later be known. His interest in science as well as art meant that he very quickly became the definition of the term 'Renaissance Man'. In 1482 he moved to Milan and worked as an engineer and painter to Duke Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo was still in Milan and already in his early 50s when the young Michelangelo began to develop an important reputation. Leonardo had just completed one of his masterpieces, *The Last Supper*, which was worked on between 1495 and 1498. In 1500 he moved back to Florence where he likely met the rising star Michelangelo.

Twenty-three years Leonardo's junior, Michelangelo (born Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni) was primarily a sculptor, despite later becoming known for his impressive frescoes, most notably the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. At age 13 he was accepted as the apprentice to Domenico Ghirlandaio, though he purportedly left after a single year claiming he had nothing more to learn. It was at this point that Lorenzo de' Medici of the influential family of the same name took the young man under his wing, providing him with both an excellent education and access to the Medici art collection. This gave Michelangelo an appreciation of the art and philosophy of the ancient Romans and Greeks.

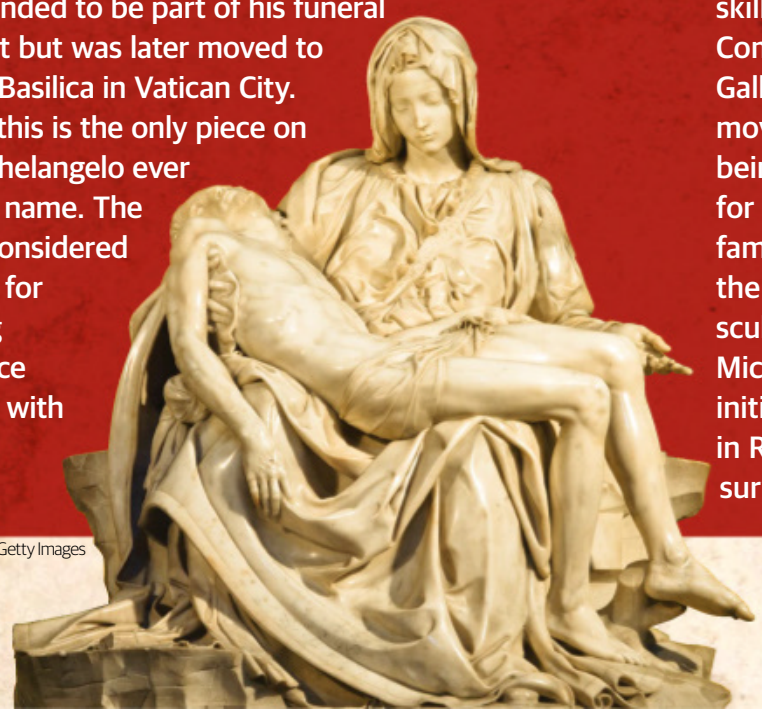
"In the late 15th century and into the early 16th century, there were a number of sculptures dug up in Rome, most notably the *Apollo Belvedere*, excavated around 1489, and the *Laocoön*, excavated in 1506," explains Dr Matthew Landrus of the University of Oxford. "This discovery and others resulted in a rise of interest in classical work and classical approaches to painting and sculpture." This influence is particularly evident in the work of Michelangelo, especially in the creation of his statue of *David*.

However, *David* would also result in one of the first signs of a growing rivalry between the two men. This huge statue was carved from a vast block of marble which had previously been deemed unworkable by two other sculptors due to it having too many imperfections. The result was that for 25 years, the marble remained untouched. Enter the 26-year-old genius Michelangelo, who accepted the challenge and whose resultant 14ft statue depicts the Biblical hero David of 'David and Goliath' fame in a previously unseen light. "Michelangelo changed the discourse of how to portray David, who was considered a personification of Florence," says Landrus. "Previous representations were of this relatively

BELOW Five of Michelangelo's most famous works

PIETA

Translating as 'the pity', *Pieta* depicts Mary holding the body of Jesus after the crucifixion. Originally commissioned by the French Cardinal Jean de Bilhères, it was intended to be part of his funeral monument but was later moved to St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Uniquely, this is the only piece on which Michelangelo ever signed his name. The statue is considered important for combining Renaissance ideologies with a gothic flavour.



© Getty Images

BACCHUS

Completed between 1496 and 1497, *Bacchus* is one of Michelangelo's early works and demonstrates his incredible skill despite his relative inexperience. Commissioned by the banker Joseph Galli for his garden, the statue was moved to Florence in 1572 after being purchased for the Medici family. *Pieta* is the only other sculpture from Michelangelo's initial period in Rome that survives.

normal teenage boy, but Michelangelo changed that tradition by producing this muscular, expressive sculpture, showing his readiness for battle as a way of saying that Florence should see itself as not a normal teenager but as strong and ready for battle." However, despite the work's obvious power Leonardo seemed not to share in his contemporaries' enthusiasm for the statue. When it was decided that it would not be placed atop a cathedral as originally intended, Leonardo tried to sway opinion away from placing it in a prominent position within the Loggia della Signoria (in the Piazza della Signoria). Landrus quotes a record of the meeting on the *David*, on 25 January 1503, with 27 other consuls and overseers for the cathedral, where Leonardo recommended that it should instead be "on the parapet where they hang the tapestries on the side of the wall; with appropriate ornament and in a way that does not interfere with ceremonies of state." Landrus says: "With the *David*, Michelangelo's reputation improved significantly, and if he had heard that Leonardo recommended against a central position in the Loggia, he would've been annoyed."

What was it Leonardo had against Michelangelo's *David*? It appears that the two may have had somewhat differing opinions when it came to their crafts. During the early 16th century, despite the fact that wealthy patrons had contributed to a rebirth of the visual arts, at this point they were not viewed as on the same intellectual plane as others such as poetry or philosophy. Michelangelo was part of this environment where painters had a great deal of courtly respect, as did sculptors, but in these courtly debates the poets were often the supreme scholars. "Painters and sculptors were during the 15th century beginning to get recognition as courtiers, whereas the practical arts were not previously considered intellectual," explains Landrus. "What we see in Michelangelo's work as sculptor, painter, architect and poet is that he actively worked to improve the social status of the practical arts."

"LEONARDO WAS STILL IN MILAN AND ALREADY IN HIS EARLY 50S WHEN THE YOUNG MICHELANGELO APPEARED ON THE SCENE"

However, just before he had contact with Michelangelo, Leonardo wrote at the Milanese debates about which of the practical and liberal arts were superior, putting painting above sculpture. If Michelangelo had known of these debates it is likely he would have disputed such claims about sculpture. "Leonardo had written that 'the sculptor conducts his work with greater bodily fatigue', by contrast with the 'mental fatigue' of the painter, and that the sculptor 'engages in a highly mechanical exercise, often accompanied by great amounts of sweat composed of dust and converted into mud'," says Landrus. "This is part of another ongoing discussion of the work of the sculptor as not being as intellectually engaged as that of the painter."

Perhaps the defining moment of the pair's relationship was the events that occurred when they were each commissioned to redecorate the Council Hall of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. In 1503 the 51-year-old Leonardo was ▶

FAR-LEFT A print by Marcantonio Raimondi showing one of the surviving preparatory drawings for Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina*

LEFT The Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, where Michelangelo and Leonardo were commissioned to paint separate frescos on the walls of the council hall

RIGHT Michelangelo's *David*. Leonardo said it should not be put in a prominent place in the Loggia della Signoria

3x © Getty Images

CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL

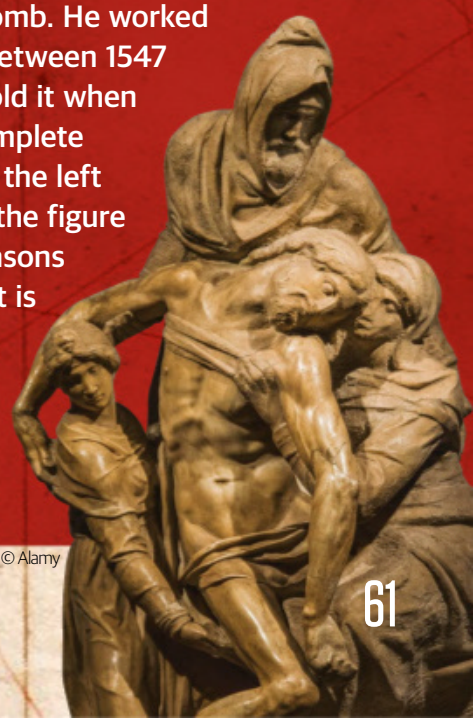
Originally the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City was painted blue and covered in golden stars, while the walls were adorned with frescos by various artists. In 1508 Pope Julius II hired Michelangelo to give the ceiling a makeover, despite the young artist being known primarily as a sculptor. The resultant work is incredibly striking, particularly the image of God reaching out to give life to Adam. The Sistine Chapel is used by the cardinals of the Catholic Church when selecting a new pope.

MADONNA OF BRUGES

Created shortly after the renowned *Pieta*, this *Madonna* was the only statue to leave Italy during Michelangelo's lifetime when a rich cloth merchant from Bruges, Belgium, purchased it. The statue was removed to protect it during both the French Revolution and World War II, first to Paris and secondly it was smuggled to Germany before being found hidden in a salt mine in Austria.

THE DEPOSITION

Housed in St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, *The Deposition* was a piece Michelangelo originally carved for his family tomb. He worked on the statue between 1547 and 1555 but sold it when it was still incomplete after damaging the left leg and arm of the figure of Christ for reasons still unknown. It is speculated that it was because the marble may have been flawed.



5x © Alamy

challenged to paint a vast wall fresco of the Battle of Anghiari, fought on 29 June 1440 between the forces of Milan and a league of Italian states led by the Republic of Florence. However, just a year later Michelangelo accepted a similar commission to complete the remaining mural in the same hall. The younger artist was to depict the Battle of Cascina, which took place in 1364 between Pisan and Florentine forces. Although it was never intended as such, the painting of the battle scenes must have been seen as an opportunity for a competition between the two artists. As Landrus explains: "Having to produce works that would be side by side. That's competition, isn't it? At that point you have to show who is the better painter."

To create his Battle of the Anghiari, Leonardo looked to experiment, and according to an anonymous author referred to as Anonimo Gaddino he chose to use an 'encaustic' (wax and pigment) method noted by the ancient Roman writer Pliny the Elder in his book *Natural History*. Leonardo thought this would allow him to create an undercoat that could absorb multiple layers of pigments in wax. Christopher Heath Brown and Jean-Pierre Isbouts suggest in their work *The Da Vinci Legacy* that the experiment failed due to the wall refusing "to absorb the pigments, causing the paint to drip and run... the fresco began to deteriorate almost as soon as Leonardo's brush left it." What remained was marvelled at for the successive decades until 1565 when Giorgio Vasari, a man who had spent so much time chronicling the lives of the great artists, including Leonardo, was commissioned to paint over the master's work with another battle scene. In the years since this travesty occurred, the *Battle of Anghiari* has developed a reputation as a 'lost Leonardo', with several attempts to find traces of the painting beneath Vasari's.

Michelangelo's progress, on the other hand, although avoiding any similar disasters, was lacking in comparison to his rival's.

"*DAVID* WOULD ALSO RESULT IN ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF A GROWING RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO MEN"

LEFT The *Mona Lisa*, Leonardo's masterpiece which was still being worked on in his studio upon his death in 1519

RIGHT Leonardo's bronze horse, supposedly the subject of a row between the artists

Michelangelo completed a complex 'cartoon', which has nothing to do with Mickey Mouse and is in fact a word meaning a "full-scale preparatory drawing for a fresco, oil painting or a tapestry" according to the Royal Academy of Arts. Completed in charcoal it was said to be a wonder to behold, though unfortunately it too is now lost. What does remain are a number of preparatory sketches, including a rather striking study of one of the combatants lower back and bare buttocks, which was auctioned at Christies on the 5 July 2011. Just before the battle the men of the Florentine army were purportedly enjoying a spot of skinny dipping when the alarm sounded, and were forced to run and grab weapons in a mad panic. The resultant surviving sketch is striking and we can only wonder how magnificent the cartoon may have been had it survived.

Despite the fact that these two works were not completed, the direct competition between two of the world's greatest artists was, in the words of the art historian Kenneth Clark, "the turning point of the Renaissance."

Such was the legend of the rivalry between the two that a number of unflattering stories about the pair's relationship began to emerge. One anecdote shows a particularly bitter moment between them. One day Leonardo was called by two men in the Piazza Santa Trinità who were discussing Dante. Leonardo was asked by the pair if he could help settle a dispute concerning Dante and, spotting Michelangelo, he called over to him, suggesting he might be better informed. However, the younger Michelangelo mistook Leonardo's meaning and

VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

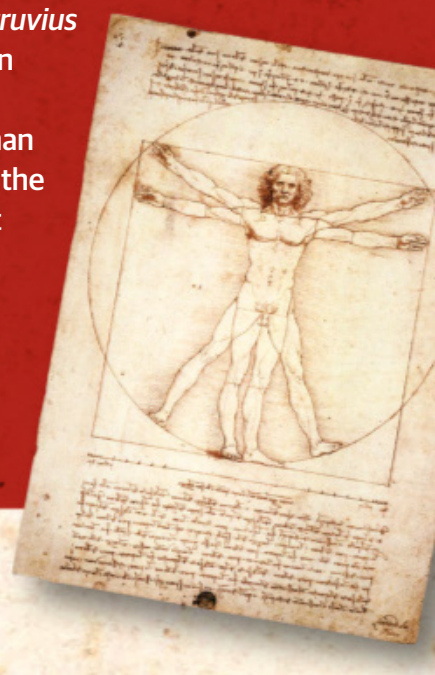
This was originally intended to be part of a magnificent altarpiece in the chapel of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in the church of San Francesco Grande, though this never occurred. Despite being commissioned in 1483 it wasn't completed until 1508, and a dispute over money caused Leonardo to sell his first version, meaning that two are now in existence. The one pictured here is available to view in the National Gallery, London.

THE LAST SUPPER

Painted on the wall of a former Dominican Convent at Santa Maria delle Grazie, this fresco has undergone numerous restorations since its original composition. Leonardo carried out numerous preparations before he began work on *The Last Supper*, including creating a number of preparatory sketches. The size of *The Last Supper* is incredibly impressive, at 4.6 metres high by eight metres wide.

VITRUVIAN MAN

Although Leonardo is perhaps rightly remembered best for his paintings, his scientific sketches are still important works of art. Completed in 1492, the sketch is also known as *The proportions of the human body according to Vitruvius* showing Leonardo's intention to demonstrate what he believed to be the ideal human proportions and building on the work of the Roman architect Vitruvius. The drawing is surrounded by Leonardo's own notes and today is part of the permanent collection of the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice.



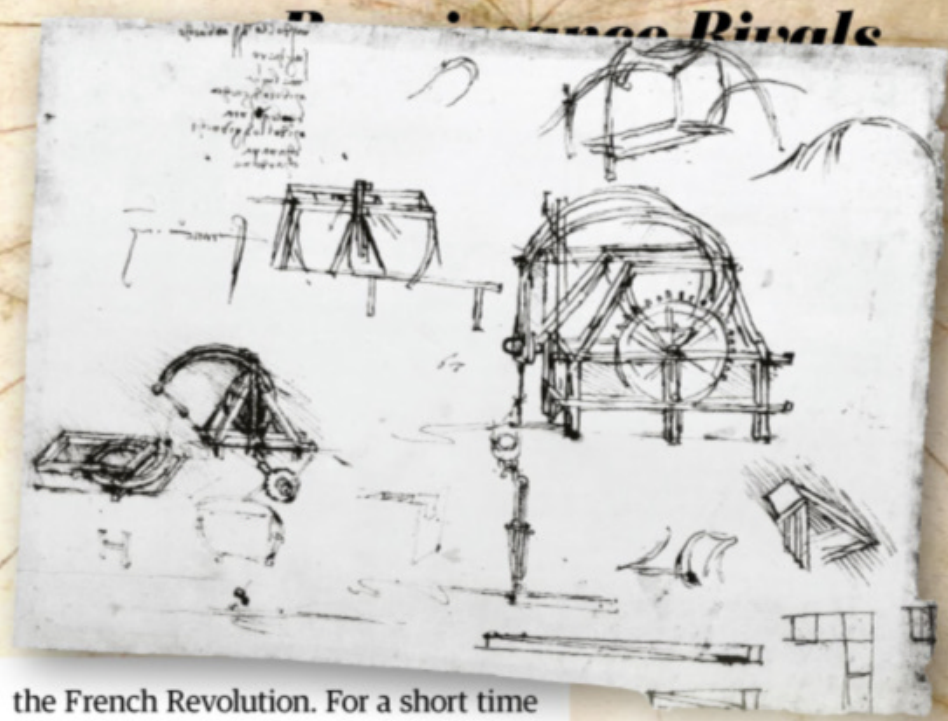
inferred that he was insulting him. In response he is said to have stated: "Explain it yourself, you who designed a horse to cast in bronze and couldn't cast it and abandoned it out of shame."

The insult was a reference to Leonardo's *Horse*, a huge statue commissioned by Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo crafted a 24-foot clay model and intended to cast the sculpture from it in bronze. The always-experimental Leonardo devised a complex process with which he hoped to cast it in one go. However, the French invasion put a halt to any such plans. When troops marched into Milan in 1499 and happened upon the gargantuan clay statue they used it for target practice and completely destroyed it. If true, Michelangelo's inference that it was Leonardo's innovative process that caused the statue to be abandoned and not the French invasion must have angered Leonardo. In 1494, Ludovico Sforza gave the bronze reserved for the horse to the city of Ferrara to make cannons for use against the invading French. In 1999, a full-scale bronze version of Leonardo's horse was unveiled in Milan after businessman Charles C Dent spent 17 years raising funds for Nina Akamu to create the artist's lost masterpiece.

On the 2 May 1519, Leonardo da Vinci died at the age of 67. Arguably the most famous painting in the entire world, the *Mona Lisa*, was still in his studio despite having been started in 1503, suggesting he had continued to work on it for several years. Following his death the painting was acquired by the French King Francis I and remained in the royal collection until it was claimed as the property of the people during the French Revolution. For a short time Napoleon had the *Mona Lisa* hung in his bedroom, before it ended up in the Louvre, where it can be viewed today.

Michelangelo died on 18 February 1564, his works such as *David* and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel ensuring that, like his rival, his reputation would continue to thrive centuries later.

The relationship between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo must be viewed in the context of its time and place. "For the early modern period, this rivalry was normal," says Landrus. "This was a very important part of the substantial competition for commissions, especially in Florence, where there were many artists." Exactly how personal the conflict between the two got we will never know, but for the most part the rivalry seems to have remained relatively healthy. In fact, it's possible that the resultant air of competition helped to foster an environment in which some of the world's greatest masterpieces were created. Landrus concludes: "The importance of this rivalry, as with all rivalries between studios during this time, was that the quality of the work improved significantly."



ABOVE An example of some of Leonardo's technical drawings. This sketch is for a perpetual motion device

© Getty Images

8x © Alamy

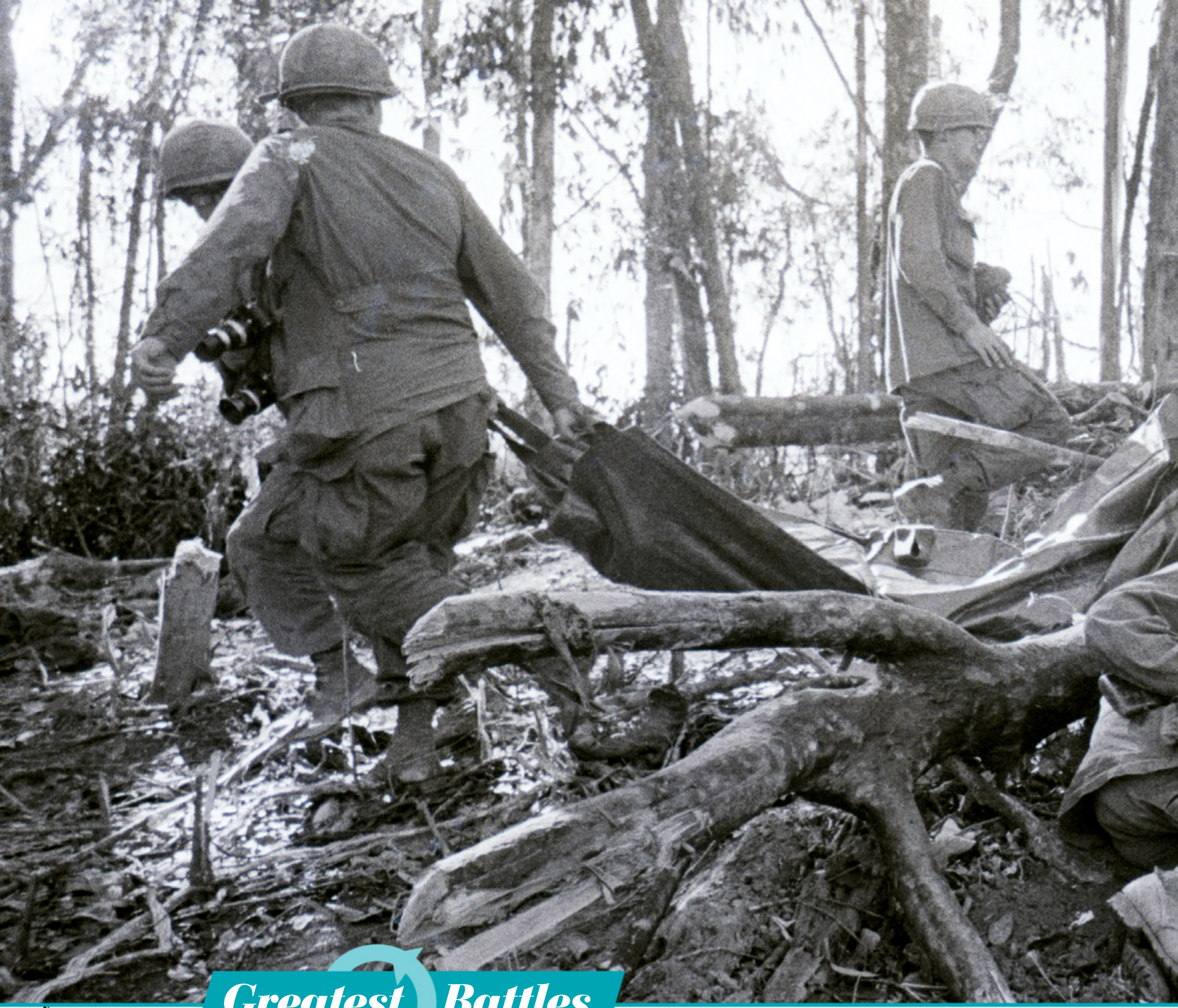
BELOW Five of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous works

SAINT JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS

Another religious painting, albeit a particularly striking one, the figure depicted here is St Jerome who is known for translating the Bible into Latin. Later in life he was said to have become a hermit and lived in the desert, and it is this period that Leonardo chooses to depict. Shockingly, despite the work's incredible power, it is in fact unfinished.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Another unfinished work, this was commissioned by the Augustinian monks of San Donato a Scopeto in Florence, but when Leonardo had to leave a year later the painting was left incomplete and remained so upon his death. The Virgin Mary and child are in the centre, and the painting is particularly striking due to its depiction of the pleading old men and armed soldiers surrounding them.



Greatest Battles

BATTLE OF DAK TO

KONTUM PROVINCE, VIETNAM, 19-23 NOV 1967

Written by William E Welsh

At the beginning of 1967, General William Westmoreland had the best-trained and best-equipped forces that the USA had to offer under his command in South Vietnam, following a two-year build-up. Westmoreland headed the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, a joint-service organisation that directed the US-South Vietnamese war effort against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

Among his most valuable forces were those trained as airmobile infantry. These elite units could be moved around the country to deal with expanding battles, and could match the best of the North Vietnamese units. One of these airmobile forces was the 503rd Infantry Regiment of Brigadier General John Deane's 173rd Airborne Brigade. These 'Sky Soldiers' no longer jumped like their

predecessors in WWII. Instead, they were airlifted into battle on Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopters, which were called 'Hueys'. Westmoreland used the three battalions of the 173rd as a 'fire brigade' that he transferred as needed to hot spots along the South Vietnamese frontier bordering Laos and Cambodia.

Westmoreland's strategy at the outset of 1967 was to strike Viet Cong and North Vietnamese base camps and large troop concentrations. The North Vietnamese regularly infiltrated the Central Highlands of South Vietnam to engage US and South Vietnamese forces. They would move south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and then cross uncontested into the sparsely populated highlands. Once there, they routinely attacked the chain of US Special Forces camps and ambushed US units airlifted into the mountains to engage them.

Blanketed in triple-canopy jungle, the Central Highlands were the southernmost section of the Annamite Range in Southeast Asia. Thick underbrush, vines and bamboo formed the bottom layer of the jungle. Finding the elusive enemy was a challenge because the upper canopy blocked out much of the sunlight, even during the daytime.

A major spur of the Ho Chi Minh Trail led into Kontum Province. Situated on the spur was Base Area 609, a way station for North Vietnamese infantry and artillery regiments on their way into South Vietnam. Major General Hoang Minh Thao commanded the B-3 Front and directed the operations of the North Vietnamese 1st Division in the Central Highlands.

Knowing that the Americans liked to seize high ground for their firebases, he directed that his forces build layered defences on key hills near Dak To. The fortified bunkers and trenches were connected by a network of tunnels. These tunnels enabled the North Vietnamese to move safely from one point to another during a battle.

The Montagnard tribal village of Dak To in Kontum Province was situated in a valley of strategic value to both the Americans and North Vietnamese. The Green Berets had established a camp at Dak To in 1962, but they abandoned it shortly afterwards because the enemy threat was too great for its small garrison.

Major General William Peers' US Fourth Infantry Division arrived in Dak To in January 1967 and immediately began establishing a large base camp to support the division's operations in Kontum Province.

When the North Vietnamese stepped up their operations around Dak To in summer 1967, Peers requested more troops. Westmoreland sent Brigadier General John Deane's 173rd Airborne Brigade to assist him. The paratroopers' baptism of fire with the North Vietnamese came in June. During the Battle of the Slopes, Alpha Company of 2nd/503rd had two platoons overrun in a firefight with a North Vietnamese battalion. Shortly afterwards, the North Vietnamese withdrew to their sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia to rest and refit.

LARGE COMMUNIST BUILDUP

Westmoreland received reports in early November that five NVA regiments were massing for an attack on the US Special Forces camp at Dak To. These were the 24th, 32nd, 66th and 174th infantry regiments, and the 40th Artillery Regiment (composed of two 122mm rocket battalions and a 120mm mortar battalion). Anticipating that the Americans would seek to control the prominent hills as staging areas for operations and as firebases, the North Vietnamese began fortifying them in October. One of these was Hill 875, an enemy bulwark near the Cambodian border.

On 2 November Sergeant Vu Hong of the 66th Regiment surrendered to South Vietnamese soldiers at the village of Dak Ri Peng 8km west of Dak To. He gave US Army intelligence officers the positions of the North Vietnamese infantry regiments operating in the jungle around Dak To. He said the 66th Regiment intended to attack Dak To from the southwest. The 32nd Regiment had taken up a blocking position south of Dak To from where it'd attempt to prevent US forces from interrupting the 32nd Regiment's attack. The other two regiments, the 24th and 174th, were north of Dak To.

Major General William Rosson, the commander of the corps-level Field Force I, directed the operations of the 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Brigade during the November offensive in the region. Rosson directed Brigadier General Leo Schweiter to operate from the village of Ben Het a short distance northwest of Dak To. While the 173rd Airborne pushed southwest from Ben Het, the 8th and 12th

Members of the 4th Battalion load wounded aboard a UH-1D helicopter for evacuation from Hill 875 © Alamy

Infantry Regiments of the 4th Division would follow a parallel line of advance east of the Sky Soldiers. South Vietnamese troops would engage enemy forces north of Dak To.

Hoang, commanding operations in the Central Highlands, had initially intended to have his infantry overrun the Special Forces base camp at Dak To. When this became impractical because of the rapid deployment of large US infantry units, he ordered his forces to focus instead on ambushing and destroying an American battalion in the jungle. Schweiter established two firebases, numbered 12 and 13, near Ben Het. Over the course of the campaign, he would establish two more firebases deeper into the jungle to support his battalions.

The first firefight between the Sky Soldiers and the North Vietnamese occurred on 6 November at Hill 823. After clearing the hill, the paratroopers established Firebase 15 on it. Four days later the Sky Soldiers established Firebase 16 on a twin-peaked hill 6.5km from the Cambodian border.

Construction of the firebase began on 11 November. Major James Steverson's 2nd Battalion arrived by helicopter at the firebase in preparation for conducting sweeps south of it. Meanwhile, helicopters brought in a battery of 105mm howitzers, as well as 81mm and 8.2-inch mortars.

FIREFIGHTS IN THE JUNGLE

Two companies of the 2nd Battalion engaged in a firefight with the North Vietnamese south of the firebase on 13 November. On 18 November a Green Beret strike force looking for the North Vietnamese found a large enemy force entrenched in a bunker complex on Hill 875. Hill 875 was situated 19km southwest of Dak To and 3km south of Hill 882. When Schweiter learned of the encounter, he told Lieutenant Colonel Steverson to send his battalion to engage the enemy on Hill 875.

Schweiter desperately wanted to achieve a victory over the North Vietnamese before all of their battalions had withdrawn to Cambodia. He wrongly assumed that the troops on Hill 875 were elements of the weakened 66th Regiment. It would turn out, though, that his Sky Troopers were about to engage two fresh battalions from the 174th Regiment, which was falling back towards Cambodia. The 2nd/174th occupied Hill 875, and the 3rd/174th held an adjacent hill to the west.

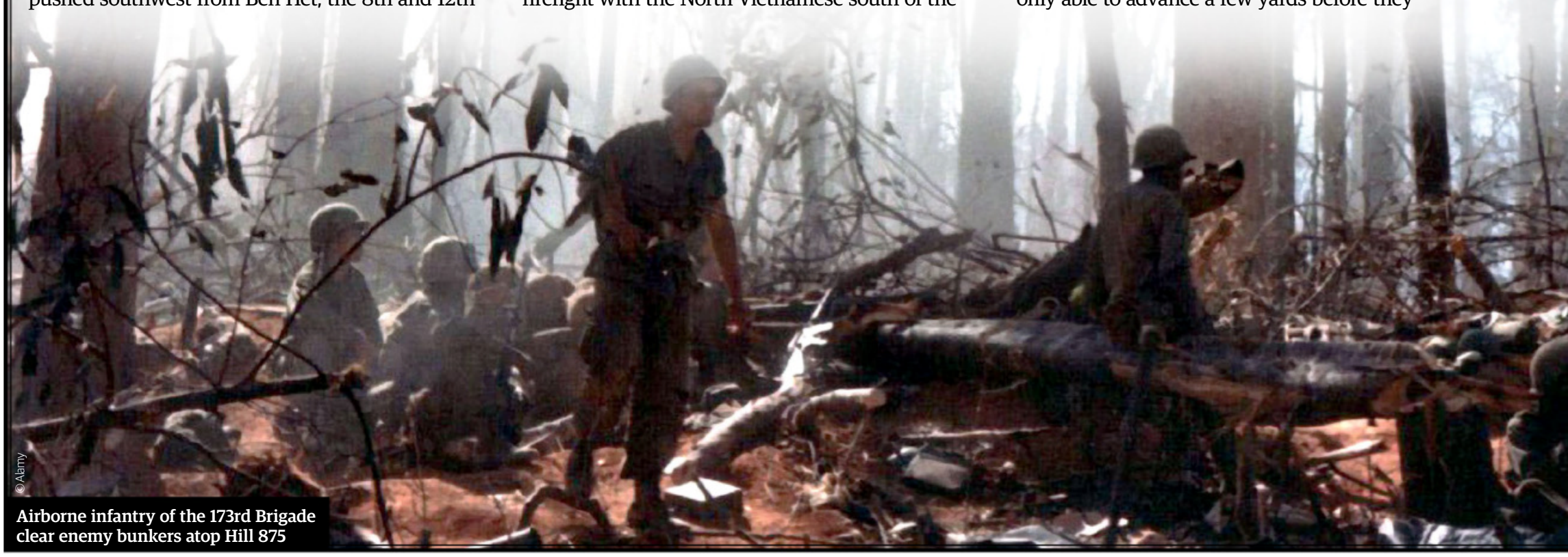
Steverson's paratrooper companies were already in the jungle southwest of Firebase 16, so he told their commanders to proceed to Hill 875. Bravo Company, which was understrength due to combat losses, was to remain at the firebase to guard it from attack. He instructed his three company commanders that when they made contact they were to withdraw and allow aircraft and long-range artillery to destroy the enemy forces.

ASSAULT ON HILL 875

At midmorning on Sunday, 19 November, the 330 paratroopers assigned to the mission began moving up the north slope of Hill 875. Dog Company advanced on the east side and Charlie Company advanced on the west. As for Alpha Company, it remained in reserve near the base of the hill.

They halted temporarily to let F-100 fighter-bombers drop napalm over the top half of the hill. Next, howitzers from the nearest firebase hurled 33lb shells that slammed into the hillside. The North Vietnamese weathered this in bunkers, tunnels and caves in the back walls of the trenches.

Charlie Company made contact with the enemy at 10.30am. The fighting raged for the next five hours. The lead platoons in each company were only able to advance a few yards before they



© Alamy

Airborne infantry of the 173rd Brigade clear enemy bunkers atop Hill 875

became pinned down on the hillside by enemy fire. The North Vietnamese fired small arms, automatic weapons and B-40 rockets at the Americans.

The paratroopers were able to pry the enemy out of some forward trenches and advance about 30 metres. They were shocked, though, to find the enemy firing on them from behind. It then occurred to them that the enemy was moving through tunnels to return to trenches the Americans had already cleared.

ENEMY SPRINGS AMBUSH

Alpha Company's Captain Michael Kiley directed his weapons platoon to work as fast as possible to clear a landing zone so that the wounded could be evacuated. They went to work 70 metres below Kiley's command post. The North Vietnamese attacked Alpha Company at 2.30pm. North Vietnamese soldiers armed with AK-47s slaughtered the weapons platoon and wiped out Alpha's command post. The North Vietnamese showed no quarter to the Americans. They executed the wounded at point-blank range.

The soldiers of Charlie and Dog companies abandoned their gains on the upper slope to form a tight perimeter. Troops of all three companies immediately began entrenching. The North Vietnamese launched wave after wave of attacks against the American perimeter throughout the afternoon, and succeeded in downing six Hueys that were bringing supplies and ammunition.

Steverson had no choice but to request reinforcements. Schweiter ordered Lieutenant Colonel James Johnson to prepare his 4th Battalion for an airlift to Fire Support Base 16. Once there, the battalion would march to Hill 875. To prevent them from being ambushed, howitzers would furnish a curtain of fire to protect each company.

ACCIDENTAL BOMBING

In the late afternoon, fighter-bombers began attacking the enemy positions on the hillside. They dropped napalm canisters just 30 metres from the 2nd Battalion's perimeter. A Marine A-4 Skyhawk flying in from the north over the Americans,

PEOPLE'S ARMY OF NORTH VIETNAM

© Alamy

NGUYEN CHÍ THANH

A general in the North Vietnamese Army, Thanh joined the Communist Party in the mid-1930s and rose to the Politburo by 1951. He was the leading strategist of the People's Army and was the one who presented the plans for the Tet Offensive in 1967, although he died shortly before the plan was implemented.

Image showing representation only. ©Getty Images

HOÀNG MINH THAO

Major General Hoang Minh Thao was the man on the ground for the Dak To confrontation with US forces and was well prepared for their arrival and the tactics they were likely to employ. By building tunnel networks connecting their trenches, they regularly flanked American attempts to suppress them.

US ARMY

© Getty Images

WILLIAM WESTMORELAND

Commander of US forces in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, Westmoreland went on to be chief of staff of the US Army from 1968 to 1972. His strategy of attrition against the Viet Cong proved to be unsuccessful, not least at home, where the war was becoming increasingly unpopular.

© Alamy

WILLIAM R PEERS

Peers was in command on the ground for Dak To and committed his forces to repelling the North Vietnamese attack despite advice that it would be too costly. In 1969, Peers was appointed by Westmoreland to investigate the My Lai Massacre as he had a reputation for fairness and objectivity.

© Alamy

JOHN R DEANE JR

When Peers requested reinforcements to hold Dak To in Operation Greeley, it was Deane's 173rd Airborne Brigade that was sent to forge a combined effort, although it had not operated in the highlands before. On 23 August he turned over command of the 173rd to Brigadier General Leo H Schweiter.

rather than from the east like all the other aircraft, dropped a bomb by mistake on the command post and aid station that saw 42 killed and 45 wounded.

The Americans defending their small perimeter called in artillery strikes throughout the night. In addition, an AC-47 'Spooky' gunship circled overhead in the darkness laying down a stream of fire on the enemy positions. The second day, 20 November, was hell for the beleaguered survivors of the 2nd Battalion, who had been without water for a two-day period. Helicopter gunships made several attempts to make runs against enemy positions on the morning of the second day, but heavy fire from the North Vietnamese forced them to turn back.

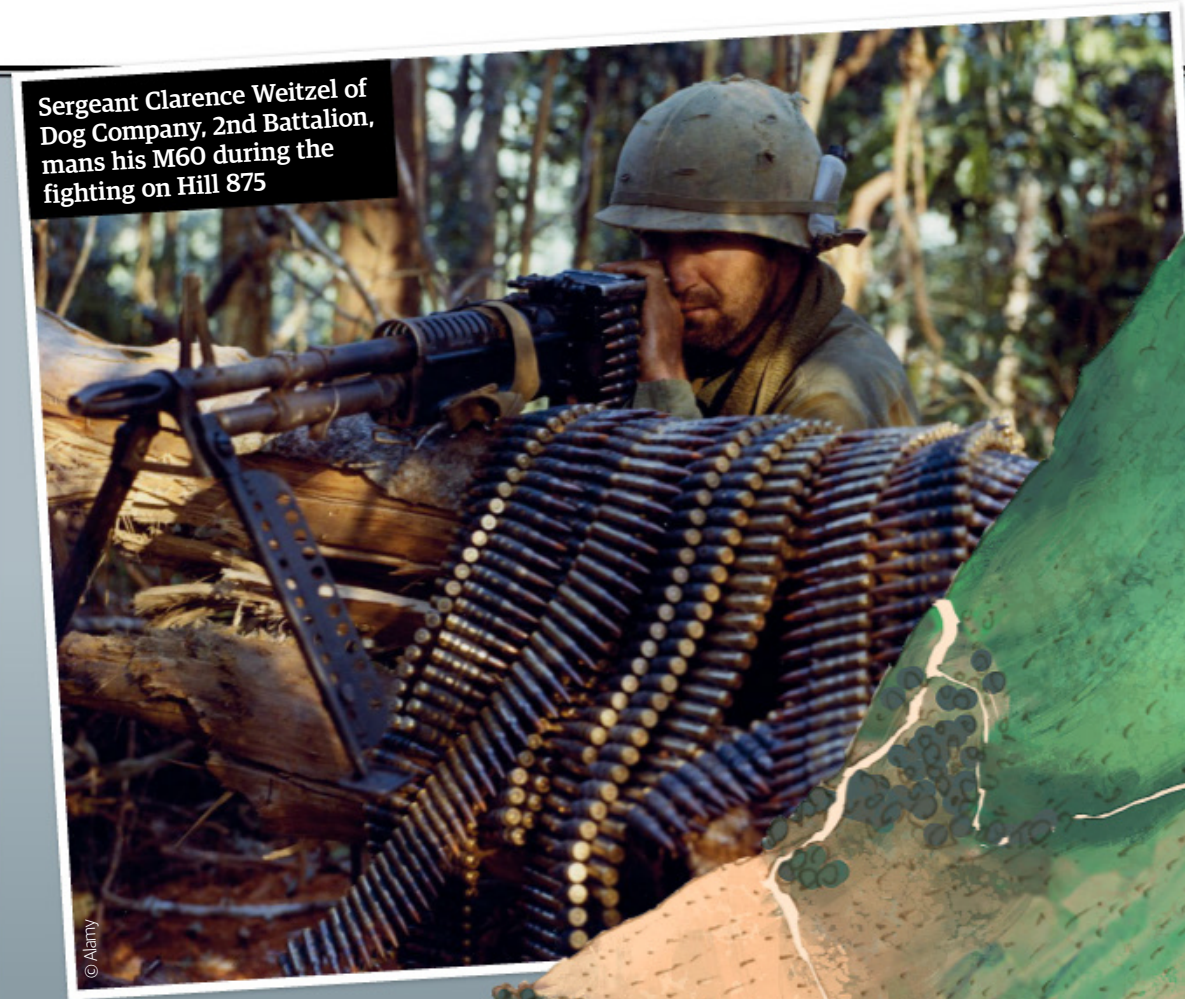
The three companies of the 4th Battalion arrived at Hill 875 that night. Meanwhile, Steverson sent his second-in-command, Major William Kelly, by helicopter to take command of the situation on Hill 875. Kelly found that all of the surviving paratroopers of the 2nd battalion had been wounded. When Schweiter was informed that the 4th Battalion had arrived safely, he gave Johnson command of the forces on Hill 875 since it would fall to his battalion to drive the enemy off the hill. Schweiter had no intention of quitting the hill. The next two days were spent preparing a new landing zone, evacuating the wounded, and attempting, without success, to retake the top of the hill.

AMERICANS CAPTURE HILLTOP

Five F-100s arrived in mid-morning on 23 November to pound the enemy positions in preparation for the 4th Battalion's second attempt to capture the hill. American jets dropped four tons of high-explosive bombs and three tons of napalm on the enemy positions. The paratroopers of the 4th Battalion then surged up the scorched upper slope. They met no appreciable resistance because the enemy had evacuated from the hill during the night. As the North Vietnamese withdrew, they took their dead and wounded with them. The two battalions of the 173rd brigade were flown off the hill at the end of the day.

The 2nd Battalion suffered 87 killed, 130 wounded and three missing, while the 4th Battalion lost 28 killed, 123 wounded and four missing. The Americans estimated that the 174th Regiment lost 300 men on Hill 875. Although their eventual triumph on Hill 875 had the hallmarks of a pyrrhic victory, American senior commanders insisted that the 2nd Battalion had survived a North Vietnamese ambush that was intended to annihilate the battalion.

The Americans later learned that the 174th Regiment was fighting a rearguard action on Hill 875 to buy time for the battered 66th Regiment to escape to Cambodia. Although the North Vietnamese did not destroy an American battalion, they bled the elite 173rd Airborne Brigade in a slugfest that will forever be remembered as one of the epic border battles in the Vietnam War.



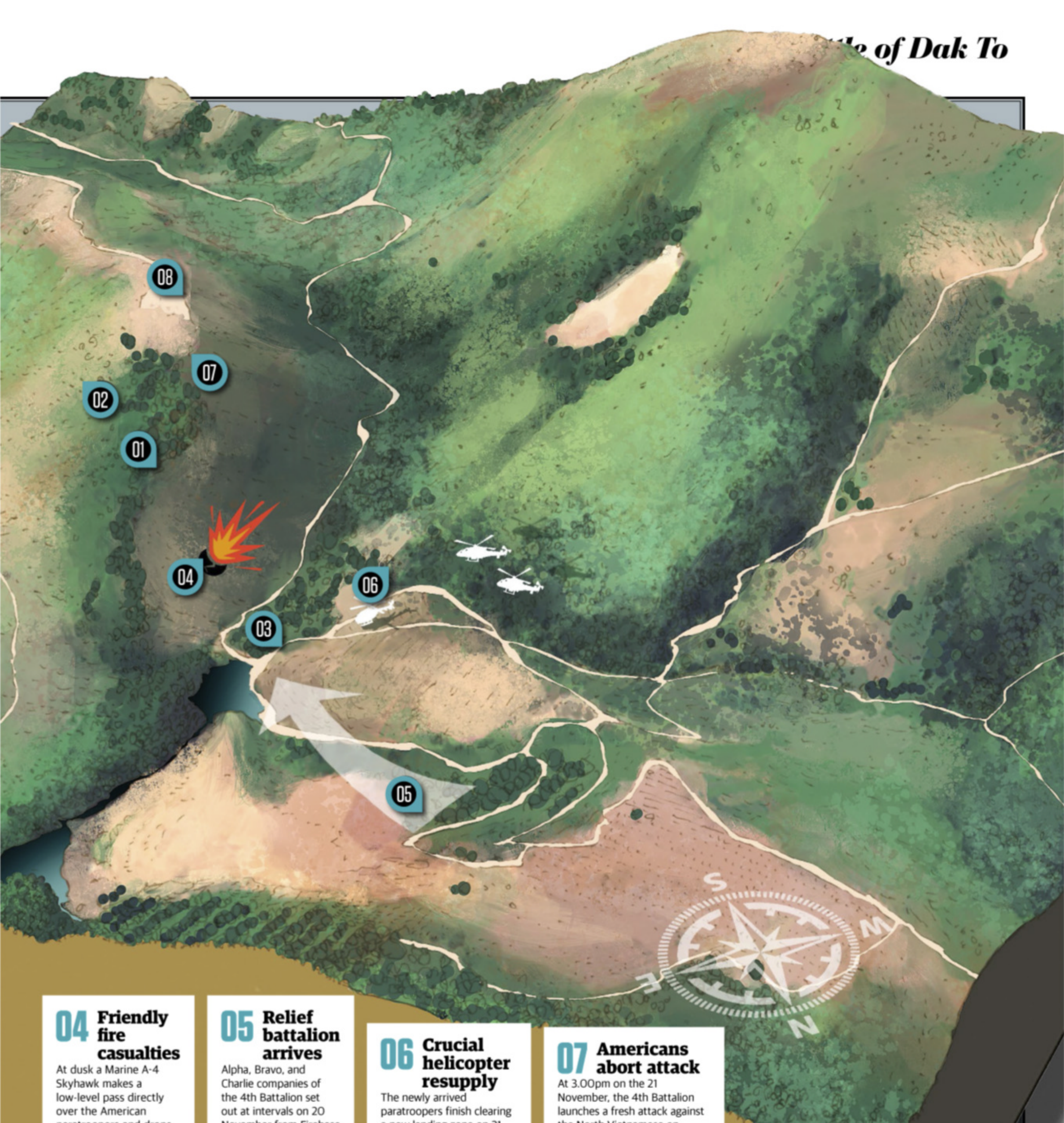
Sergeant Clarence Weitzel of Dog Company, 2nd Battalion, mans his M60 during the fighting on Hill 875

© Alamy

01 Opening shots
North Vietnamese soldiers in bunkers, trenches and behind trees atop Hill 875 open fire on the point squad of Charlie Company at 10.30am on 19 November. The forward-most American troops of Charlie and Dog companies go to ground and return fire with M-16s and M60s.

02 Fire support
The American paratroopers receive artillery support from a distant firebase 30 minutes later. When the paratroopers resume their advance, they only progress 30 metres because of the withering fire from the entrenched North Vietnamese.

03 Command post overrun
The North Vietnamese launch a sustained assault on Alpha Company at the base of Hill 875 at 2.30pm. They overrun its command post, weapons platoon and one of its infantry platoons. The survivors of Alpha Company retreat uphill and join forces with the other two companies.



04 Friendly fire casualties

At dusk a Marine A-4 Skyhawk makes a low-level pass directly over the American paratroopers and drops a 500lb Snakeye Bomb short of enemy positions on the hillside. The bomb explodes in the middle of the Sky Soldiers' command centre and casualty collection point, killing 42 and wounding 45 paratroopers.

05 Relief battalion arrives

Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie companies of the 4th Battalion set out at intervals on 20 November from Firebase 16 for Hill 875. Bravo Company of the 4th Battalion arrives in the late afternoon. Alpha and Charlie companies arrive after dark. They find the survivors of the 2nd Battalion in a state of shock.

06 Crucial helicopter resupply

The newly arrived paratroopers finish clearing a new landing zone on 21 November. At 11.00am Huey helicopters flying from Firebase 16 brave enemy ground fire to deliver weapons, ammunition, rations and water in large rubber bladders. Casualty evacuation flights begin at around 2.30pm.

07 Americans abort attack

At 3.00pm on the 21 November, the 4th Battalion launches a fresh attack against the North Vietnamese on Hill 875. After two hours of hard fighting, the battalion commander calls off the attack. The two companies advancing abreast are not able to keep pace with each other, which exposes the one with the greatest penetration to being cut off by the enemy.

08 Americans capture crest

On the morning of 23 November five F-100s unleash four tons of high-explosive bombs, three tons of napalm, and 2,400 rounds of 20mm cannon fire on enemy positions. Afterwards, the 4th Battalion launches a fresh attack and captures the crest of Hill 875.

Map by: Rocio Espin

What If...

OPERATION VALKYRIE HAD ASSASSINATED HITLER?

Desperate members of his closest circle seize one last chance to eliminate the Nazi leader and change the course of history

Interview by David J Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

ROGER MOORHOUSE

Moorhouse is an award-winning historian and author of the critically acclaimed *Killing Hitler: The Third Reich and the Plots against the Führer.*

Image courtesy of Roger Moorhouse

By July 1944 the Allied armies were back on European soil. As they began to push east towards Germany, the Nazi conspirators of Operation Valkyrie triggered their plan to blow up Adolf Hitler. The reclusive and paranoid dictator was encircled by a ring of steel and secrecy within his Wolf's Lair complex in Eastern Prussia, which only the most trusted could penetrate. Numerous attempts to kill him had failed, but on 20 July 1944 it was within his own stronghold that a bomb in a briefcase came tantalisingly close to wiping out perhaps the most notorious dictator of the 20th century and changing the course of World War II.

What made the conspirators of Operation Valkyrie believe they could succeed where previous attempts had failed?

I don't think the Valkyrie conspirators were necessarily more confident that they would succeed. As much as anything, theirs was a desperate act. It was a throw of the dice and a symbolic gesture – as one of their number said at the time – "to show that another Germany existed." Crucially, what set them apart from the previous plots and attempts on Hitler's life was that they realised that it was no longer enough simply to assassinate their target. To achieve just this would leave a whole range of uncertainties and far too much to chance. They had to launch a coup to seize power as well. This made their task infinitely more complex and heightened the possibility of overall failure.

Of course, the great advantage that the Valkyrie conspirators had was that they had access to Hitler. By 1944, the German leader was a virtual recluse who was barely seen in public and had a highly refined and effective personal security regime. Anyone trying to target him would have to get through numerous levels of layered security checks, but a senior military officer coming to a briefing could avoid all that. What they were unable to plan for was the intervention of sheer chance. The briefcase containing the bomb was moved from its spot right next to Hitler, where it would've almost guaranteed his death, when Colonel Heinz Brandt inadvertently pushed it further under the table. He was just making room for himself, but in so doing the thick oak table leg shielded Hitler from the explosion. He escaped with just shredded trousers and a perforated eardrum. Those who'd plotted the bombing and attempted coup would eventually not be so fortunate.

Was there enough popular support, military strength and leadership to pull off a coup after Hitler's death? Would it have replaced bad with bad?

The civilian side of the plot was reasonably numerous and wide-ranging, but it is highly dubious that they could have taken

© Alamy

Main image sources: © Alamy, © GettyImages

RIGHT This reconstruction shows Hitler's position and that of the briefcase containing the bomb

L'EXPRE
JOURNAL DU S
10 C. LE NUMERO – FRANCE: 3 FR. ~ PARAIT SIX FO
on et Rédaction : rue Saint-Maurice 4, Téléphone 5 32 36 • Annonces
TLER EST MORT
La radio allemande
officiellement
que le «führer»
en combattant
de la chanc
La nouvel
avec scen
à Londr
où l'o
faire
mil
Hitler parvenue en Suisse. On voit ici un
gauleiter» avant de partir
Berlin.
ntrée
EXTRA
Vol. 1—No. 279
1 Fr.
THE STARS AND STRIPES
PARIS EDITION
Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations
1 Fr.
EXTR
Wednesday, May 2
HITLER
DEAD

THE PAST

1939

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Assassination attempts on the German dictator were nothing new and there had been numerous other failed plots to dispose of him, such as in 1939 in a beer hall in Munich. A timebomb was planted, and the explosion killed others but not Hitler because he had already left the event. Other attempts over years, and their subsequent failures, only served to increase an eerie sense of invincibility, both in Hitler's own eyes and in those of the millions who looked to him for leadership, inspiration and strength.

JUNE 1944

ALLIES BACK IN EUROPE

With Operation Overlord on 6 June 1944 – D-Day – the tide of the war changed dramatically in favour of the Allies. It became increasingly clear that it was not a case of 'if' the Germans would lose the war, but 'when'. Becoming ever more withdrawn within a much-reduced inner circle of only his most trusted military advisors, a deluded Hitler continued to plan his strategy to repel the advancing Allies. But for many high-ranking German soldiers and officials, waiting for the Allies to rid them of Hitler was unthinkable – they had to grasp the moment for themselves.

JULY 1944

A PLAN IN TATTERS

Being so close to the Fuhrer was all in a day's work for Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. That was the easy part. But for all the planning it was to be a stroke of fate that left the plot in ruins when the briefcase bomb under the table was moved at the last moment. As he fled the scene Von Stauffenberg made the fatal error of assuming Hitler was dead. Mixed messages flew around the airwaves, but it was not so. They had failed. Hitler had survived with only minor injuries and torn trousers. His retribution was swift, with the conspirators and thousands of other suspects rounded up and executed.

power on 20 July, let alone held on to it. For one thing, the extent of popular support [for an assassination and coup] is rather questionable. Of course, there were many ordinary Germans who were tired of the war by July 1944, and some of them might have felt freed from their loyalty to the regime by the death of Hitler, but such was the power of Nazi propaganda and control that I doubt it would have been enough to sustain the coup.

In addition, the coup plotters lacked the determination and grit to do what was necessary. Instead of executing their senior opponents, it seems they preferred to effectively inherit power by assassination. Anyone of senior rank in the public eye who was not eliminated would only be a rallying point for further unrest and resistance to change. So in reality their actions did not match the enormity of the task in hand. They had recognised the need to not only assassinate Hitler but also launch a coup to take control, but perhaps naively they convinced themselves that the demise of Hitler would somehow trigger a popular response that would take on its own momentum to meet their objectives. Had they been more brutal they might have had a better chance of success.

Is it possible there would have been a civil war in Germany?

Civil war was always a possibility, but it would have required some sort of popular uprising against Nazi rule. In order to achieve this, the plotters would've had to overcome some overwhelming challenges: the sheer weight of the years that the Nazi regime had been in power, the charismatic hold of Hitler himself that was still at the centre of the message (even though by this time he was rarely seen in public), and the reach and depth of the Nazi information and propaganda machine. And it could have led to a more fractured country with various and complex factions looking for an opportunity to gain from the unrest and uncertainty. As it was, the Valkyrie plotters needed to dupe most of the army units operating in their name into believing that they were acting in support of the Nazi regime, but that ruse would not have worked for more than a few hours. For any sort of prolonged confrontation to be won, the plotters would have needed a large slice of popular support.

Under what terms would the new leadership have surrendered to the Allies? Or would they have fought on, and with what possible outcome?

Had they managed to secure control of the levers of power, the coup plotters

TOP-INSET
Field Marshal Errwin von Witzleben was executed along with other high-ranking conspirators

ABOVE
Nazi officials examine the aftermath of the explosion. Four people were killed but Hitler survived

LEFT
Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg was close to Adolf Hitler and planted the bomb

wanted to agree terms with the Western Powers while fighting on against the Soviets. But for any of that to be feasible, any terms had to be realistic, achievable and not imbalanced in such a way that Germany was merely just trying to soften the blow of defeat. It was from the east that the Germans feared for their future more than anything, from a Soviet Union that would inflict its revenge for what it had suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany. This was perhaps an understandable ambition from a German conservative perspective, but it flew in the face of the many expressions of Allied unity – not least the Casablanca Declaration of 1943, which demanded the unconditional surrender of Axis forces. In such circumstances, I think it's doubtful that any separate peace with the Allies would have been possible.

As the plot was before the 1945 Yalta Conference, how could its success have changed the Western Allies ambitions in relation to Germany and Russia? How would the map of Europe been affected? And what about Italy?

It is tempting to imagine that a seizure of power by the coup plotters in July 1944 could have caused profound change to the circumstances that we know played out. However, any significant change would have been dependent on the new German regime being able to persuade the Western Powers to effectively abandon their Soviet ally and sign up to a separate peace. It would also have relied heavily on how the new leaders of Germany were dealing with any possible domestic unrest caused by the coup. How would any unrest impact their ability to be effective partners, politically and militarily, in a rapidly conceived alliance against the Soviets? The Allies would also have to be convinced that the new leadership stood as one, with a single vision and determination which went beyond just a Germany without Hitler, or even Nazis. The idea of substantial change to the geo-political landscape post-coup, therefore, is a chimera, an unrealistic vision. The constellation of power ranged against Germany by 1944 was too great to effectively dismantle.

What would the impact on the war in the Far East have been and why?

There is a possibility that the war in the Far East might have seen some impact. Obviously the Allied forces were fighting on a separate front in a completely different part of the world, and with that came enormous logistical and tactical issues which extra forces could have helped to alleviate even a little. With a separate peace in Europe, it would theoretically have been possible for the United States to transfer more of its forces to the Pacific theatre, thereby bringing more pressure to bear on the Japanese. This in turn may have had some impact on how and when the Allies would and could have defeated Japan. Given enough time and resources it may have considered a full invasion of the Japanese mainland itself. One might speculate that a swifter Japanese collapse could have meant that deployment of the atomic bomb could have been avoided, and as such the actual use of such a weapon in combat would have remained very much on the drawing board as a theoretical and untried tactic.

However, given that any transfer of American troops would have likely taken months to put into effect, one must wonder whether the effect of such a shift might actually have been minimal.

THE POSSIBILITY

1944

FROM FOE TO FRIEND

Had the plot succeeded, it's possible (however remote) that the Germans may have surrendered and struck a deal with the Western Allies. From bitter experience the Germans knew just what kind of adversary the Russians could be, and they knew the terrible suffering inflicted by the Nazis would never be forgiven. If the Germans could somehow play on any doubts the West had about their Russian partners – and what they intended to gain from the war – then the Western Allies might, just might, be tempted to ally with Germany to keep the Russians out of Europe...

1945 – PRESENT

NOT-SO-COLD WAR

If the West had helped Germany escape the clutches of the Russian advance, perhaps persuaded by the inevitable division of territories and natural resources held by the Nazis around the world, then the present-day map of Europe may have looked very different. The possibilities seem endless: no Warsaw Pact countries, no Iron Curtain, no divided Germany and no Berlin Wall. The influence of the Soviet Union would be substantially diminished in the post-war era and the rising star of the United States would shine even more brightly.

1945

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SURRENDER

If the conflict in Europe had ended more quickly there could have been a dramatic impact on the war against Japan. In time, more troops, ships and armour could have been redeployed to the Far East to the point which, perhaps, an invasion of Japan itself would've been a distinct possibility. There would have been a much higher cost to pay in casualties on both sides, but if Japan had been overwhelmed by conventional forces then maybe the use of the atom bomb wouldn't have been necessary to bring about its surrender.

All images: © Alamy

Through History

JAPAN: COURTS AND CULTURE

A new exhibition at Buckingham Palace brings together 400 years of Japanese art and design with pieces taken from the Royal Collection

In 1600, William Adams became the first Englishman to visit Japan when his ship anchored off the island of Kyushu. This first encounter between England and Japan subsequently blossomed into a relationship that has grown and flourished for more than four centuries. The practice of gift-giving characterises this friendship, and has historically helped to connect the two nations both politically and culturally. For centuries, the Royal Collection has housed artistic treasures, acquired since Adams' first visit to Japan, which have come into the possession of various members of the British royal family. In a new exhibition in the Queen's Gallery of Buckingham Palace, individual Japanese pieces from the collection are being displayed by the Royal Collection Trust to demonstrate the historic relationship between the royal houses of Britain and Japan.

The exhibition delves into this rich cultural exchange between the dynasties and displays a range of some of the finest works of Japanese art and design, unique in their provenance and exceptional in their quality. Featuring rare examples of porcelain, armour, painting, metalwork, lacquer and embroidery, this collection highlights a range of different styles of Japanese craftsmanship. The exhibition is open now and runs until 12 March 2023.

All image credits: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022

KYOTO VASE

Made in the 1700s in Kyoto, this vase was probably acquired by George IV. The blue and green colouring is common in pieces for courtly patrons. However, the red enamel is highly unusual, with no other examples known to exist.

IWAI YOZAEMON ARMOUR

This samurai armour is the oldest piece on display in the exhibition. Presented to King James I in 1613 by Shōgun Tokugawa Hidetada, the impressive and priceless armour was the first diplomatic gift between Japan and Britain.

HERON LACQUER BOX

The first gift between Britain and Japan after World War II, this box was presented to Queen Elizabeth II for her coronation. The box was made by the Imperial Household Artist Shirayama Shōsai, and features a delicately painted heron.

FOLDING SCREEN PAINTING

This painting was sent to Queen Victoria by Japan in 1860. One of a pair, it was only discovered in the Royal Collection in recent years. It is the first time these paintings have been on display to the public.

ARITA JARS

Part of Mary II's collection at Hampton Court Palace, these jars date to the 17th century. An example of Arita porcelain from Hizen Province, the jars are a superb example of the porcelain commodities exported from Japan.

EMBROIDERED FOLDING SCREEN

Presented to Edward VII on the occasion of his coronation in 1902 on behalf of the Meiji Emperor, this screen depicts the beauty of nature, a prominent theme in Japanese art. Each panel represents a different season.

TEAPOT AND CUPS

Bought in Japan in 1881 by Princes George and Albert Victor, this set was created for tourists with its combination of European teaware design and Japanese motifs. It was gifted to Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales.

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

2x © Alamy

THE DUKE

A heartwarming comedy about how a pensioner stole the UK's most famous painting

Certificate: 12 **Director:** Roger Michell **Cast:** Jim Broadbent, Helen Mirren, Matthew Goode **Released:** Out now

Just what is a 'feel-good' film? The most obvious answer is 'a film that makes you feel good', but it goes a little deeper than that. Any cheap comedy can put a smile on your face but for a movie to be truly uplifting it also needs to carry a message of positivity that touches the hearts of its audience. *The Duke*, a comedy-drama based on the true story of the theft of Francisco de Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington, is just such a film. Incredibly well made and endlessly amusing, *The Duke*'s tale of a man who just wanted to help people cannot fail to move its audience with its heartwarming message.

The film is based on the real-life tale of Kempton Bunton, a 61-year-old retired bus driver who in 1961 supposedly stole Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery. The painting was then held for ransom, to be returned when £140,000 (what the British Government had paid for the work) was given to fund free TV licences for elderly people. The film seems to follow the events fairly closely, though it adds its own sense of style as well as comedy to the proceedings.

The story is told from the perspective of Bunton and as such the aristocracy is very much painted as the bad guy in Bunton's quest for a little kindness in this cruel world. Richard Bean and Clive Coleman's screenplay is a true delight, with a real sense of wit and wry humour. The script relies on a fairly large revelation that occurs during the third act and as such we imagine *The Duke* is best enjoyed as we saw it, with limited knowledge of the true events on which it is based. It is only in this mindset that the true artistry of Bean and Coleman's script is revealed, making the viewer underestimate and judge Kempton Bunton in much the same way as his contemporaries did.

One of the key ingredients for *The Duke*'s success is the character of Bunton himself, brought masterfully to life by Jim Broadbent. A veteran actor who has appeared in everything from *Harry Potter* to *Moulin Rouge*, he is given the chance to showcase his comic timing and immeasurable on-screen warmth. Helen Mirren, on the other hand, unfortunately feels a little wasted, although she is naturally superb with the material given to her. Meanwhile, Matthew Goode is charming in a small but pivotal role.

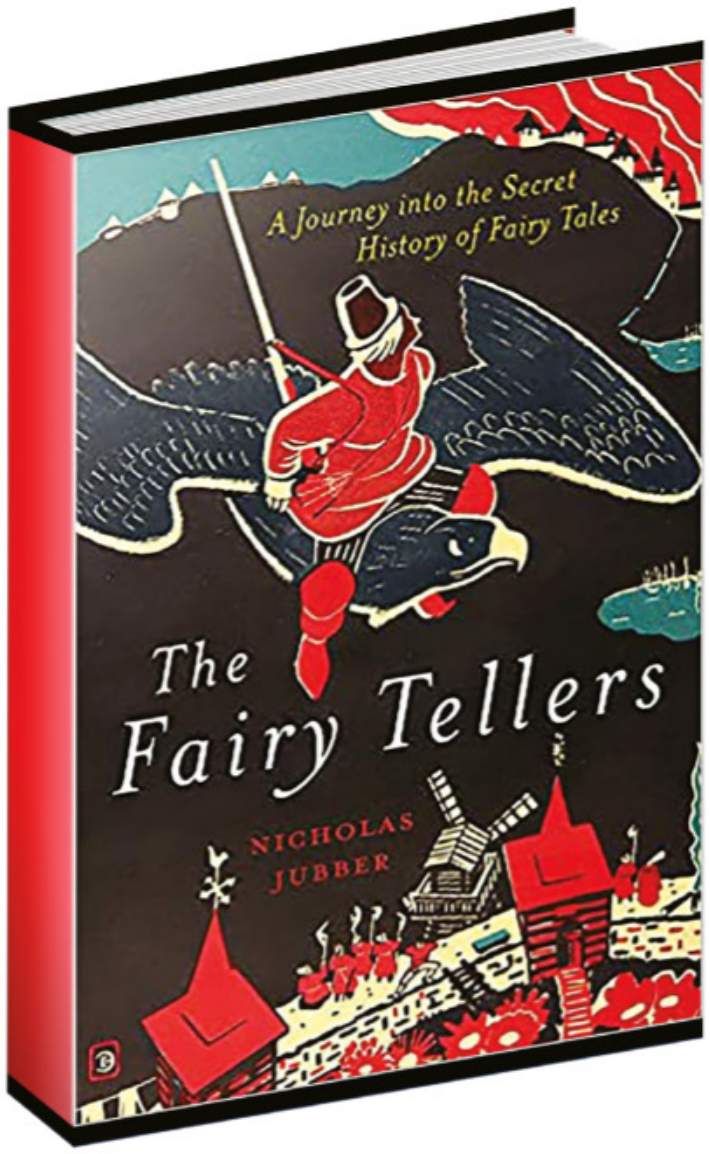
On the 1 August 2020 the BBC announced that TV licences would no longer be free for people over 75, barring those who claim pension credit. While we left *The Duke* feeling elated at the experience, convinced that it was a *true* 'feel good' film, it wasn't long before that feeling began to mellow – 61 years after Kempton Bunton's audacious campaign for free TV licences for the elderly that measure has been taken away again. ***CM***

Reviews by
Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth, Jonathan Gordon

THE FAIRY TELLERS

A history of fairy tales through the lives of their creators

Author: Nicholas Jubber **Publisher:** John Murray **Price:** £12.99 **Released:** Out now

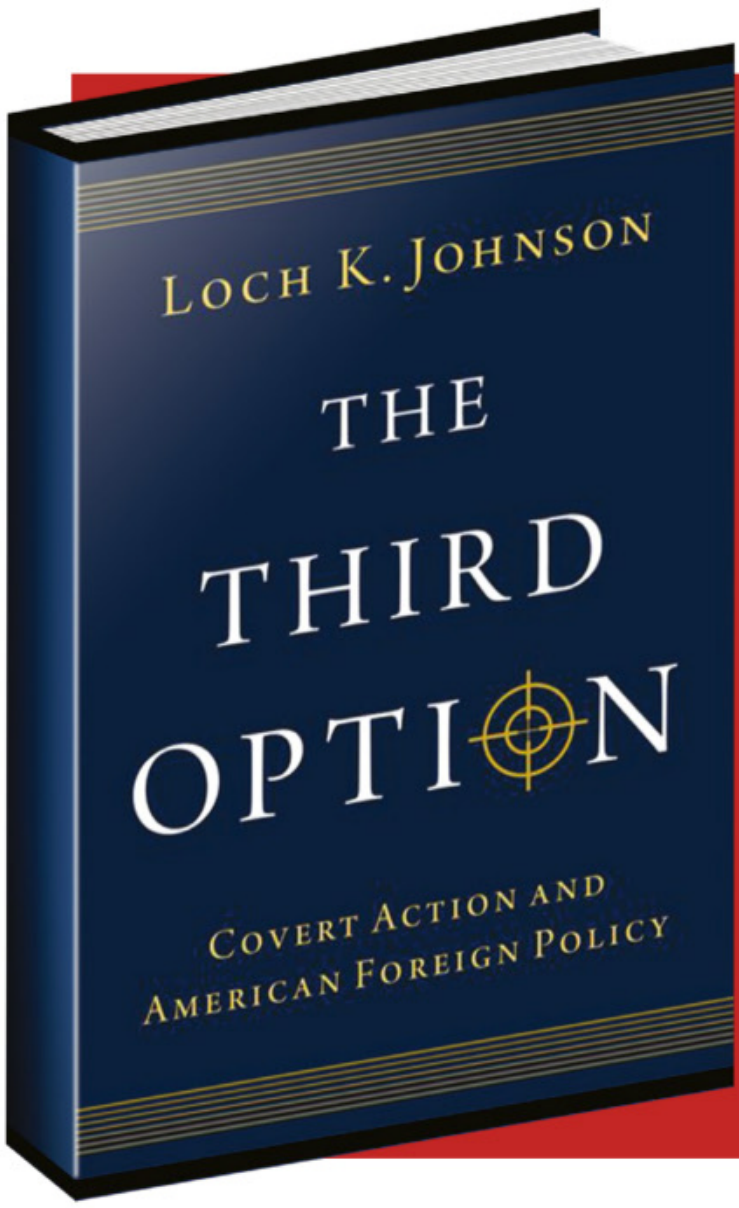


From the very first page of *The Fairy Tellers*, Nicholas Jubber's love of fairy tales is evident. The passion with which he recalls reading countless stories as a child sets the scene for a journey through the lives of some of the most prolific and influential figures who shared in this fervour for the fantastical.

The book highlights the connections between story-telling around the world, and does so by splitting each section by historic fairy-teller. Starting in Naples with an author who is credited with the first version of *Cinderella* and ending with a mysterious Indian poet, Jubber expertly moves between time and place to tell the stories of those who created some of the world's favourite tales. Uncovering the astounding lives of these fairy tale architects, Jubber shows how each was influenced by the social and political circumstances in which they found themselves when weaving their stories, and how each took inspiration from the fairy-tellers who came before them.

Jubber's descriptive style in *The Fairy Tellers*, though sometimes lengthy, transports the reader into the lives of the unlikely tellers and gives credit to those whose stories have long since been attributed to others. From Dortchen Wild, the wife of Wilhelm Grimm, to Hanna Dyab, a Syrian traveller at the court of Louis XIV of France, Jubber ensures the extraordinary lives of the forgotten fairy tale originators are remembered for their contributions to the stories and journeys that are still loved by millions today. Readers will not be disappointed to be whisked away on adventures as exciting as the fairy tales themselves. ***ES***

★★★★☆



THE THIRD OPTION

Examining the United States' use of covert action

Author: Loch K Johnson **Publisher:** Oxford University Press **Price:** £22.99

On 24 February 2022 Russian forces invaded Ukraine, throwing the world into turmoil. The United States condemned the attack but made it clear they wouldn't be sending troops to Ukraine. Instantly, articles began to appear questioning whether the US would consider 'covert action', but what exactly does that mean? *The Third Option* by renowned political scientist Loch K Johnson explains the attraction of covert operations in the history of US international relations, and covers everything from propaganda campaigns to political assassinations.

The book is split into five sections: Tradecraft, which explores the forms of covert action and how this can escalate, Practice 1947-1975; Practice 1975-2020; Law and Accountability; and Ethics and Assessments. Johnson explores the various forms and uses of covert action, as well as diving deep into its history and how it develops over time. The discussion on the use of propaganda and the dissemination of false information is particularly fascinating as what has been described as 'the first information war' grinds on in Ukraine.

Johnson's writing style is academic though never dry or dull. He covers his subject in detail but manages to maintain the reader's interest throughout by explaining his points simply and concisely. For those interested in American foreign policy this book is essential and an excellent introduction to the shadowy world of clandestine operations. ***CM***

★★★★☆

Legends of the Wild West

Hey there, stranger! You don't look like you're from round these parts. If you're going to make it in this town you'd better learn the ways of the Natives, explore the lives of infamous outlaws like Jesse James and Billy the Kid, seek your fortune in the state made of gold, familiarise yourself with the parts of town you should avoid and keep on the right side of the law. Welcome to the Wild West friend. You're in for one hell of a ride!

Buy *Legends of the Wild West* in shops or online at **magazinesdirect.com Price:** £15.99

HISTORY of WAR RECOMMENDS...

The House of Godwin

Author Michael John Key **Price** £25 **Publisher** Amberley

In this fascinating book, Key recounts the extraordinary rise and the even more dramatic fall of the House of Godwin and successfully argues that, if Harold had prevailed at the Battle of Hastings (and it was a very close-run thing) he would have gone on to be regarded as one of the great kings of English history, and Earl Godwin as the founder of one of the great royal dynasties. But Harold's exhausted men were unable to hold out. William won, and history took one of its sharpest turns.

THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM

A stunning illustrated edition of a powerful piece of historical analysis

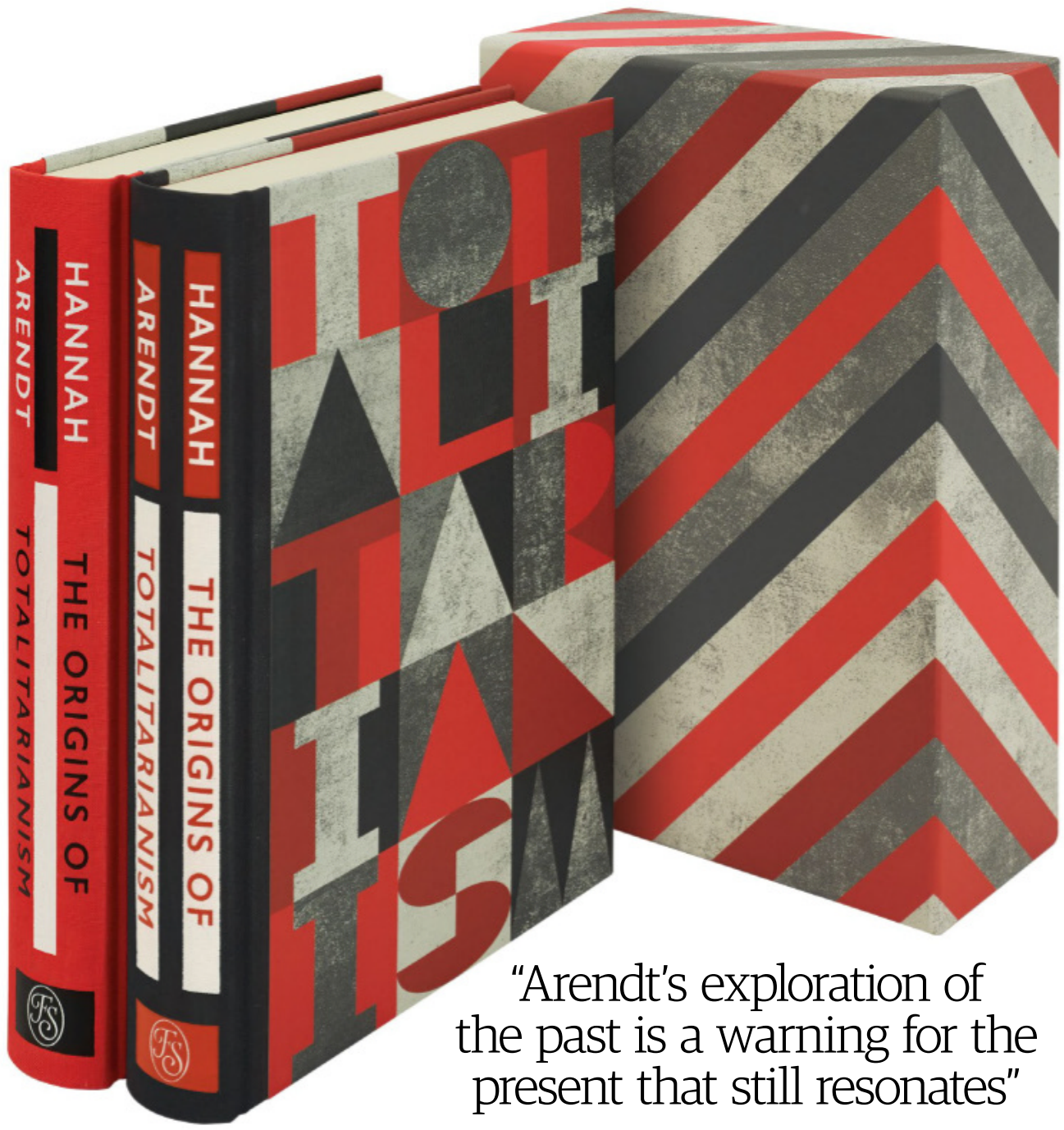
Author: Hannah Arendt **Publisher:** The Folio Society **Price:** £150 **Released:** Out now

When studying the history of authoritarianism, with a particular focus on the regimes of the 20th century, you're unlikely to get far without reference to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Originally published in 1951, this examination of the rise of authoritarian regimes in Germany and Russia in particular remains a powerful testimony and examination by someone who had first-hand experience of living under such governments. What's more, much of what Arendt wrote about 70 years ago feels relevant today. She paints a picture of a world reeling from catastrophe, divided and fragmented like few times before.

In examining how the Nazis and Bolsheviks rose to power, Arendt identifies feelings of disconnection, both from the challenges of reality and the banality of the 'status quo', as entry points for totalitarian mass movements to take root or for opportunistic leaders to pivot to populist authoritarianism. Much of her exploration of the past is a warning for the present and future; a warning that still resonates.

The initial research for this book was done through the 1940s after the rise of authoritarianism had led to war and driven her from her home in Hanover, Germany. Arendt escaped Nazi rule in 1933, not long after Hitler rose to power and after she was arrested for conducting research into antisemitism. She gradually headed west to Paris, but fled to the US when Germany invaded, settling in New York in 1941. Her analysis of the rise of antisemitism as something separate to anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence that had existed for millennia is fascinating.

Written in the aftermath of WWII as the Cold War took hold, Arendt paints a bleak picture of the future for humanity with authoritarian rule or destruction feeling close at hand; her analysis of antisemitism, racism and authoritarianism remains as powerful and applicable as ever. She also makes an important plea not to bury the ugly elements of our past in favour of the more uplifting stories and claim only those as 'heritage'. Seventy years later, we're still having many of the same debates about what history should and shouldn't be reevaluated.



> "Arendt's exploration of the past is a warning for the present that still resonates"

This message, that the past should be faced and understood to the best of our ability rather than being painted as inevitable or overwhelming, also resonates strongly today.

There's room to quibble with some of the research and some of the analysis may not hold up to modern scholarship, as the preface by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Anne Applebaum points out. However, this is a fascinating time capsule of political analysis and thought as well as a book of history. It is a warning and a remembrance. ***JG***

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

I WAS MONTY'S DOUBLE

Director: John Guillermin **Starring:** ME Clifton James, John Mills, Cecil Parker **Country:** UK **Released:** 1958

A wartime comedy-drama in which Montgomery's real-life double plays himself. But does it sacrifice fact for fun?

B−

VERDICT: Gains points for having James play himself, but loses them for fictionalised action and cheesy comedy

01 The film stars ME Clifton James as himself, an actor who was Field Marshall Montgomery's double in an operation to confuse German intelligence as to where the Allies would launch D-Day. By casting James the film already achieves some authenticity.

02 The fictional Major Harvey (John Mills) first sees James impersonating Monty during a show. In reality it was the intelligence officer Dudley Clarke who conceived the idea after seeing a different actor, Miles Mander, in a film. Mander was too tall so an alternative was found.

03 The real operation was code-named Copperhead and was part of Operation Bodyguard, which aimed to divert Nazi attention away from the Normandy landings. The film, which adds plenty of comedy to the tale, renames it Operation Hambone.

04 James meets Montgomery himself. This actually occurred and Montgomery gave his approval for the plan. After James' death in 1963, Montgomery said: "He performed a very useful purpose at a very dark time of the war. What he did completely fooled the Germans."

05 Having been convinced that Montgomery was in North Africa, the Nazis kidnap James. Harvey has to rescue him before he is taken by submarine to meet Erwin Rommel. No such event occurred and James was secreted in Cairo until D-Day was well underway.

Main image: © Alamy
5x inset image source: StudioCanal/Amazon Prime

Did you know?

The pirate Bartholomew Roberts, better known as Black Bart, was said to be eating salmagundi when he was killed in an attack on his ship by HMS Swallow in 1722

Main image: © Getty Images
Inset image: © Getty Images

SALMAGUNDI

THE POPULAR PIRATE SALAD, WEST INDIES, 1700s

Ingredients

- 200g cooked chicken meat (to replace the traditional turtle)
- 1 can of corned beef
- 200g cooked white fish
- 60g anchovies
- ½ head of lettuce
- ½ cucumber
- 3 spring onions
- 4 pickled onions
- 12 pitted black olives
- 12 grapes
- ½ mango
- 4 eggs
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp mustard
- 1 clove of garlic, pressed

The scarcity of fresh food and water meant pirates relied heavily on dried meats and alcohol as a central part of their diet. Turtle was one of the most accessible sources of fresh protein, as well as beef acquired through the ransoming of cattle.

One popular dish was salmagundi, a salad that could be made using whatever meat and vegetables were available to the crew. Don't worry – this recipe doesn't contain turtle and has been updated for the modern cook! Feel free to adapt it to use whatever you can get your hands on, just like a pirate would.

METHOD

01 Finely chop the lettuce and place on a large serving plate

02 Roughly chop up the chicken, beef and fish

03 Dice the anchovies, cucumber, spring onions, pickled onions, olives, grapes and mango

04 Layer the meat, fruit and vegetables in a random pattern on top of the lettuce

05 Place the eggs in a pan of boiling water for 10 minutes until hard-boiled

06 Chop the eggs in half and place on top of the salad

07 Mix together the olive oil, white wine vinegar, mustard and garlic to make a dressing

08 Drizzle the dressing over the salad

NEXT MONTH HISTORY OF THE GODS OF OLYMPUS ON SALE 19 MAY

DISCOVER THE WHOLE PICTURE

When you explore your family tree, you find names, dates and places. But it's the extra details that truly reveal your family story.

Ancestry has a huge range of historical records, and with an average of two million added every day, there's always more to discover. So even when you think you know your family, they can keep surprising you.

ancestry®
Bring your backstory to life™

May Record Highlights*

U.S., Federal Census 1950 – **NEW**

Germany, Prussia, Brandenburg, Angermünde, Miscellaneous City Records 1706-1922 – **NEW**

1840 Denmark Census – **UPDATE**

Do you have a fascinating family story to share?

We'd love to hear about your discoveries, email us at *yourstory@ancestry.co.uk*

*Record collections subject to change.

WAR THUNDER

New? GET YOUR FREE BONUS

PLAY FOR FREE ON WARTHUNDER.COM/FLY

Windows STEAM Mac oculus VIVE

PS4 XBOX ONE PS5 XBOX SERIES X|S

Gaijin Entertainment

12 www.pegi.info